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A TREATISE

ON *THAT* BEING

BORN AGAIN,

WITHOUT WHICH

No Man can be Saved.

BY SAMUEL WRIGHT, D. D.

TO WHICH IS ADDED, THE

Communicant's Spiritual Companion:

OR, AN

EVANGELICAL PREPARATION

FOR THE

LORD'S SUPPER,

&c. &c. &c.

BY THE REV. THOMAS HAWEIS,

Rector of Aldwinckle, Northamptonshire; and Chaplain to the Right-Honourable the Earl of Peterborow.

WHITEHALL:
Printed by William Young,
FOR WILLIAM BARLAS, NEW-YORK.

1802.

Regeneration [illegible] of
Lord's Supper. — Manuals.

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PREFACE.

THE subjects in this volume are highly interesting. The words of our Saviour to Nicodemus merit the strictest attention. Nothing can be of greater importance than to understand the nature, and be persuaded of the necessity of Regeneration. Some affect to ridicule that great change as impossible, while others despise it as useless. Having a general belief that a change of some kind is necessary, many substitute in its room something of a very different nature. In no case can self-deception be more fatal..... Others have very different views of themselves, and are deeply persuaded that, unless they are created anew in Christ Jesus, they must die in their sins. By the law in the hand of the Spirit, discovering its spirituality and extent, they are convinced of their sin and misery, and their utter inability to establish a righteousness of their own. They find that the imaginations of their hearts are only evil continually, and that they are carnal,

sold under sin. The account which the Apostle gives of his condition at a certain period is descriptive of theirs: "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." Though formerly blind, they now see the absolute necessity of a new nature and complete change. Salvation is their chief concern. They cry, and the more obstructions and interruptions they meet with, they cry the more "Turn thou us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned."

Though an explication of the doctrine of Regeneration can never be unseasonable, it is peculiarly proper and suitable in times of prevailing ignorance, and seasons of reviving. It can scarcely be denied that the first is characteristic of the present period. Multitudes are as ignorant of the contents of the Bible, as if they either had it not, or had it only in an unknown tongue. But if the day is not so clear as could be desired, neither is it wholly dark. From different places we have details of partial revivings, the reality and truth of which, justified and confirmed by the future conduct of those who have been awakened, must make

all the children of Zion rejoice. Should these revivals increase and extend, at evening time it shall be light. But, when God confers any remarkable blessing on his church either by pouring out his Spirit on his own people, or adding multitudes to their number, Satan always makes the strongest exertions to mar the work, and deprive the church of the advantages, and God of the glory....If a revival cannot be completely crushed, it is commonly counterfeited, and that crafty and malicious foe has always suitable instruments ready to accomplish either the one or the other of these designs. Right-hand as well as left-hand extremes should be guarded against. The former, though more specious, are equally pernicious. To have the judgment well informed is always beneficial, but especially when the conscience is awakened and the affections excited.

In few treatises is the important doctrine of Regeneration treated in a manner better adapted to common capacities, or better calculated for general utility. Some writings require more penetration and discernment than the gross of mankind possess; and others more

leisure than they can afford. Dr. Wright's discourses are concise and perspicuous, judicious and scriptural. If carefully perused, and not in some good degree understood, it cannot be owing so much to a defect of understanding as to a want of will. They contain only a few expressions in any degree ambiguous, and to elucidate these a few notes are added. Taken in its whole contexture the treatise is truly excellent.

Once acquainted with the new Birth, men will seek information concerning the Sacrament of the Supper. The spiritual, like every other life, must be supported by nourishment suited to its nature. Nothing but children's bread will satisfy those who are born of GOD. This provision is presented in the ordinances of divine appointment, among which the LORD's Supper holds a distinguished place. It is a feast for friends. It is a singular privilege, but the improvement is seldom in proportion. Many approach the sacramental table who never experienced the new birth; and many of those who are born again "sleep as do others," and sit down to this ordinance in a very careless manner. Classing both togeth-

er, perhaps among church-members few sins are more frequent or more heinous than an unworthy partaking of the LORD's Supper. A careful perusal of Haweis' "Communicant's Spiritual Companion" would be an excellent preventative. It may safely be said of this treatise that it is as free from legal tincture as any other extant on the subject. Without omitting to open up the nature of communicating and the duties intimately connected with it, Haweis never for a moment loses sight of that Strength in which either the one or the other can be acceptably and profitably performed.

The two treatises combined will render the present volume as fit for family use, and as much entitled to a place in the private library of the Christian, as perhaps any other of the same size. The truths unquestionably deserve a place in the heart, and there is ONE who can open the heart to attend to them, without constant application to *whom*, the reception of the volume is of little moment.

The present publication is made not only with the approbation, but at the solicitation, of

a number of Ministers of different denominations.

A short account of the Authors cannot fail to be acceptable to the readers. Dr. Haweis is universally known. His praise is in all the churches. He has been long in his Master's service, and his labours have been crowned with success. He is a true friend to the doctrine of Free Grace, and an avowed and stedfast advocate for the Thirty Nine Articles of the Church of England. His zeal and activity are well known to the friends of Zion, and cannot be denied even by her enemies. He had distinguished himself amongst the most active members of the Missionary Society of London. He has published many works, which are deservedly in great celebrity. His works have already been eminently useful, and there is every reason to conclude that their usefulness will not be confined to the present, but extend to future, generations.

In the Biographical Dictionary we have the following account of Dr. Wright: "Dr. Samuel Wright was born Jan. 30, 1682....3. being eldest son of Mr. James Wright, a Non-

conformist Minister at Retford, in the county of Nottingham. At eleven years old he lost his father, being then at school at Attercliffe in Yorkshire, whence he removed to Darton in the same county, under the care of his Grandmother, and his Uncle Cotton. At sixteen he studied under the care of the Rev. Mr. Jollie, at Attercliffe, whom about the age of twenty one he quitted, and went to his Uncle's house at the Kaigh, where he officiated as his chaplain; and after his death he came to London, having preached only three or four sermons in the country. He was soon after invited to assist Dr. Grosvenor at Crosby-Square-Meeting; was afterwards chosen to carry on an Evening Lecture in Southwark, in conjunction with the Rev. Mr. Haman Hood; who soon quitting it, it devolved on Mr. Wright, then only twenty three. On the death of Mr. Matthew Sylvester, 1708, he was chosen Pastor of the congregation at Black-Friars, which increased considerably under his care, and where he continued many years, 'till he removed to Carter-Lane, which Meeting-house was built for him, and opened Dec. 5, 1734. His sermons printed singly amount to near forty. But his most consid-

erable work was his Treatise on the "New Birth." He died April 3, 1746, at Newington-Green, which was his residence."

Should this Publication meet with a favourable reception, it is in contemplation to make a selection of as many sermons and essays on the most interesting subjects from the works of Dr. Wright and other authors of great merit, though not generally known now, as will make another volume nearly the same size.

EDITOR.

A

TREATISE

OF THAT BEING

BORN AGAIN,

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No Man can be Saved.

BY SAMUEL WRIGHT, D. D.

Illud vero sæculo gratulor, repertos homines qui neutiquam in controversiis subtilibus tantum ponunt, quantum in vera vitæ emendatione, et quotidiano ad sanctitatem profectu. Utinam et mea scripta, aliquid ad hoc studium in animis hominum excitandum, inflammandumque, conferre possint: Tunc enim non frustra me vixisse hactenus existimem.

GROTII AD CRELLIUM EPIST.

WHITEHALL:
Printed by William Young,
FOR WILLIAM BARLAS, NEW-YORK.

1802.

A

LETTER

TO THE

AUTHOR:

WHICH IS HERE INSERTED, AS THE REASON OF HIS PUBLISHING THE FOLLOWING SHEETS.

YOUR ******* discourses upon the weighty subject of Regeneration, have so affected us, that we have cause to *praise* GOD, who hath blessed us with the opportunity of hearing them: And we hope a great many more have reason to do the same. We could wish they might be more public; *** and we hope you will suffer them to go abroad into the world, for the edifying the church of Christ; and to render the *filthy*, *who will be filthy still*, so much the more inexcusable.

Had not we, through grace, experienced something of the *new birth*, we should not have entered within your *meeting-house*, being of the *established church:* But this has removed our prejudices, and with St. Peter, *of a truth we perceive that God is no respecter*

of persons, nor differing opinions as merely touching church government; but in every place, *He that worketh righteousness is accepted with him.*

We hope you will excuse our great freedom; we protest before God, we have no sinister end. The good of our relatives and neighbours is near our hearts; and because we humbly conceive those *** SERMONS will conduce much thereto, we cannot but request *of you*, what we have so earnestly desired among *ourselves*, the publication of them. And shall continue to pray for the increase of God on your future labours, as well as return thanks for former benefits. And remain yours,

J. J.

R. W.

E. E.

M. M.

THE

AUTHOR'S ANSWER

TO THE FOREGOING

LETTER.

GENTLEMEN;

I RECEIVED your letter with great thankfulness to GOD, that had made the SERMONS you speak of so serviceable to you: but considering how many useful *treatises* of this *nature* are extant already, I thought your request to *print on this subject*, might very well be *denied*. And when the manner and warmth of delivering those Sermons should be a little forgotten, I was ready to conclude you might alter your sentiments of them; or at least, forbear to insist on their being sent to the Press.

In this conclusion, I imagined myself right for some months, till your applications were renewed; and a person, for whom I have a particular respect*, was engaged to pursue

* Mr. Richier.

your request with a resolution to take no denial. He has, indeed, said so much to assure me of your *sincerity* and *hearty concern*, in this matter, that I began to think it my *duty* to comply with you: and where I apprehend any thing a *duty*, I shall set *that* against all *objections*, and all other *considerations* in the world.

This liberty, however, I have taken in complying with you: That I have chosen to give you those discourses in a *different form* to what you might expect; though I hope in a way that may answer your end, as fully, as if I had published them in the *form* of SERMONS. If you look upon every *chapter* as a SERMON, and read it at once, you will find very little difference from what it would have been, had the whole been *printed* as it was *preached*. That I did not *say one* thing, and now *send* you *another*, your *friend*, that has taken the pains of *transcribing* a great part himself, will witness for me: And you yourselves upon *reading*, will, I doubt not, call to mind the *most* of what you here meet with.

The *first* SERMON you will find altered as to the *method*, in some few things; but you will easily know it again, when, every considerable thought shall occur to you, in the same words that were used before. In the whole you will find some additions; but, especially, in the third and fourth chapters. That *directory* for the devotion of a soul *first turning* towards God, p. 90, 91; and the form of a *covenant dedication* to God, p. 94, &c. I thought highly proper to insert in this publication, though not delivered in your hearing. And I found some things necessary to be *added*, that I might render the *evidences* of the *new birth* more *useful*, and less liable to *mistakes*. Some enlargements you will also find in the closing addresses to several sorts of persons: But I am persuaded you will not think, upon a serious perusal, that I could have omitted any thing I have here added.

Whether this *treatise* may be thought wise, or weak, by the generality of those that look into it, is what I shall not once enquire after. If it may prove a means *of turning any from the evil of their ways*, I shall account *that* the most grateful and desirable intelligence

concerning it. For I think I am not mistaken in declaring, That I had rather see *one* person *smite upon his breast*, and become a *true penitent*, than to see a *thousand clapping* their *hands*, whilst they receive no *real benefit* from what they hear or read.

If the following pages may answer such an end as this, I shall have reason to be *thankful to you*, for putting me upon a piece of work, that I confess I had no mind to have gone about, at this time. We live in an age that is *set against* every thing of *this nature*; and especially, if it comes from the *hand* of a *dissenter*. For which reason you will not wonder that I have shewn such a backwardness to comply with your request. Till men are more inclined to read and consider things, our time and pains in printing must turn to very little account.

However, I would hope, you will promote the reading of this *treatise* in all the *families* where you have any influence: especially on the *Lords day evenings*, when those are sometimes called together, who on other days live in the neglect of reading, and every religious

duty. A chapter then read at a *time*, will go through the *whole* in a *month*. Or if that be thought too much to read at once, each chapter may be divided into two parts, being so contrived that the matter will very well allow for it. And by this means, some persons may be engaged to *hear*, what they would not be persuaded, otherwise to *look into*, or to read by themselves.

I was going, after all, to apologize for myself, in publishing a treatise from *one set* of SERMONS which might have been much better done, by taking in some things delivered in *other* SERMONS on the like subjects: but I was immediately checked by considering,..... That it is the blessing of God *alone* to which all *success* is owing, even in the best attempts of this nature: and therefore, since it hath pleased Him to own the following discourses *already*, in such a manner as to *You*; I shall, without any more words, join with you in *hoping they may be blest to the good of others*. What Almighty God sees fit to set his *seal upon*, I shall never affect to make *apologies for*, whatever may be its after-reception.

To *him*, therefore, I humbly commit this *treatise;* and to *your service* I devote it in a particular manner, as a testimony of my being,

Your respectful friend,

and servant,

BERRY-COURT,
APRIL 2, 1715.

S. WRIGHT.

PREFACE

TO THE

EIGHTH EDITION

Of Wright on the New Birth.

IT was with very little expectation of *acceptance*, that this treatise was *first* sent into the world. But as it often happens, that we meet with *least*, where we expected *most*; so it is *sometimes* ordered by a kind providence, that we should meet with *most*, where we had the *least* expectation.

The many letters and accounts I have had, from those of different communions, upon each foregoing *impression* of this book, (many thousands of which are now spread), led me to think, that the *way to* an happy AGREEMENT among christians, is something vastly different from the schemes of *politicians* about the *outward forms* of religion; and from the laboured decisions of *learned men*, in matters of *controversy*. I cannot otherwise account for it, that so plain and unartful a performance as this, should be so well entertained, and frequently recommended by people of *all parties*, in a nation so divided as ours, and at a time when we have fallen in so many new squabbles, and prejudices against one another.

This hath led me to conclude more strongly than ever, that to *preach* up true piety, and to acquaint men more with the *spirit* of *holiness* and *regeneration*, is the surest and shortest way to *unity*. This would more effectually lay our heats and animosities, than the insisting on any other *expedients for peace* which can be contrived. And after many other fruitless attempts, we shall find this the concurrent sense of good men in all ages.

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THE

GREAT DOCTRINE

OF BEING

BORN AGAIN.

VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO THEE, EXCEPT A MAN BE BORN AGAIN, HE CANNOT SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD. *John* iii. 3.

INTRODUCTION.

THE conference betwixt our SAVIOUR and Nicodemus, out of which these words are taken, has always been thought a very considerable, and by some a very dark and mysterious part of sacred writ. Those of Nicodemus temper and sentiments have been ready, in every age, to fall in with his conduct, and his way of arguing. Whilst others, that have been more under the influence and teaching of a divine Spirit, have seen the excellency and importance of our SAVIOUR'S *Doctrine.*

The *time* in which this ruler came to our LORD, was a very apt representation of his *state.* He came in the *night*, and he appears to have been sadly in the *dark* as to what concerns the *Gospel* dispensation, and his salvation by it. He had been very much affected, it seems, with the *mighty works* of our BLESSED LORD; *for*, says he, *no man can do the miracles that thou dost, except* GOD *be with him:* But his preaching and his *words* were very differently received: They were thought to be so far from being *heavenly* and *divine*, that they were not reconcileable to *common sense: How can these things be?*

I am afraid this is too much the case of many in our own times: who, while they acknowledge that JESUS CHRIST is worthy to be owned in the brightest day, and before all the world; yet content themselves with some obscure, and partial regards to him. How many are there, who profess to venerate him as a *teacher sent from* GOD, that yet in this grand and leading point, the *being born again*, are perfect strangers to him? yea, what is worse, unwilling to be instructed by him? They are either cavilling against, or explaining away, the proper and spiritual meaning of this doctrine.

Some also there are, that have followed this metaphor the *new Birth*, with others of the like nature, so far, as to render it wholly mystical and unintelligible; making no just observations upon the more plain and express texts of scripture, where, without metaphors, the nature of Regeneration is set in a clearer light. Such mistaken ways of treating this subject, I shall endeavour to avoid. And since our SAVIOUR has summoned our attention to what he here says, by prefixing a double asseveration, to attest the truth of it,.....*Verily, verily, I say unto thee*, &c. I hope, I need not multiply words to engage a serious application of your minds, to study, and make a right use of what shall now be laid before you.

CHAP. I.

Wherein the Doctrine of being Born again, is carefully laid down.

WHEN we read so peremptory a determination, that none shall *see*, or enter into, *the kingdom of GOD*, but such as are *born again;* it is reasonable to expect, every soul that has any hope or desire of being saved, should be put upon the most solicitous enquiries after the meaning and import of this expression. And therefore I shall set myself to give

such an account of it, as that every one who reads the following treatise seriously, may both be helped to *understand* and *experience* this second birth. In doing this I would aim at,

FIRST, Informing the mind.
THEN, Awakening and convincing the conscience.
AFTER THAT, Directing the practice.
AND FINALLY, Settling and composing the spirit; by stating the evidences of this mighty change.

In *this Chapter* I shall endeavour to *inform the mind* of the attentive reader, by giving him as clear and satisfying thoughts as I can, of the *nature* of this Birth.

It was something of which Nicodemus, even as a Jew, and a *Ruler* in *Israel*, might be supposed to have a previous knowledge; or, at least, to have been sufficiently prepared for the reception of it: For otherwise our SAVIOUR would not, in such a manner as we find he does, have reproved his ignorance and slowness of apprehension; *Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?*

The writings of Moses might inform him,.....that when man first came out of the hands of his Maker, he had a soul breathed into him, by which he was rendered wiser and more excellent than the beasts of the earth: And from hence Nicodemus might have concluded.....that the same Almighty power could, by a farther inspiration and influence, at pleasure, raise man to a higher and nobler state and condition, than that, in which he now found himself, and the rest of mankind.

The writings of David and the Prophets do also describe a person's being brought into a *state of grace* and favour with GOD, by having a *clean heart created* in him, and a *new heart given to him.* And this was so particularly foretold of the *gospel times*, that it must be strange inadvertency in Nicodemus not to reflect on those pas-

Psalm li. 10. Ezekiel xxxvi. 26. *and other places.*

sages, which in such a likeness of expression, describe the very same change that our SAVIOUR here calls being *born again.*

But that which yet farther condems this *Jewish ruler*, was, (according to Dr. Whitby) a prevailing and common notion among the Jews,.....that when any man became a *proselyte* to their religion, *He was to be looked upon as an infant new born.*

These several things may all of them, be very helpful to our understanding this doctrine at present; and I would rather chuse to look upon them with such a view, than as merely serving to aggravate the fault of Nicodemus.

From our LORD's explaining himself in this matter, 'tis evident.....that to be *Born again*, includes something both *external* and *internal: except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

Now this being *born of water*, or made a *proselyte by baptism*, was so intelligible, that we find a bare mention of it is thought sufficient. But however men may value their outward privileges, yet if these are rested in, and the *greatest* stress be laid where the gospel lays the *least*, the hopes and pretensions of such will avail them very little.

'Tis a being *born* of the *Spirit* that is chiefly insisted on: And without this, none were to be looked upon as members of the Messiah's kingdom, considered either as a kingdom of *grace* or *glory.*

I know not how we can better comprehend all this in a few words, than by saying, with one of our *English* expositors, ..." He that will enter into the state of the gospel, must be " baptized: and he that will enter into a state of grace, and be " fitted for glory, must be renewed." Thus much is very plainly expressed in the Epistle to Titus; *According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost*, Titus iii. 5.

Ignorance of this work of the blessed SPIRIT, and a vain boasting of external ordinances and advantages, we have reason to fear, is the ruin of multitudes.

Hence it is that men, who profess the christian name, and are admitted into the christian church, are yet notorious for their ill lives. And whereas, at *first* it was the glory of the gospel to change the worst of sinners; it is now reproached by many, as patronizing even the worst of crimes. Christianity has sometimes *found* men in a state of brutish sensuality; but where it has savingly prevailed, it has not *left* them in such a condition. *Be not deceived*, (says the apostle to the Corinthians) *neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers,.....nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of* GOD. And though it is added, *and such were some of you;* yet we ought carefully to observe the change that was wrought in them; *ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our* GOD, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11.

So that to be interested in this the work of the Spirit, is of the utmost importance to us; and in order to that, 'tis highly requisite we should have a right notion and understanding of it. I shall therefore, according to the best and most regular thoughts I have been able to form of this matter, explain it farther to you in the following particulars.

I. *To be born again, is to have something done in us and for us, which cannot be done by us.*

This is beyond all doubt and controversy the plain sense of scripture. Less than this cannot be meant, by those many high expressions which the sacred writers frequently use: Such as, ...being *created again in* CHRIST JESUS,....and being made *new creatures;*.....being *raised* to *newness of life*, even as CHRIST was *raised from the dead* by the glory of the FATHER. So that adding these expressions to this I am upon, [a *being born again*,] all laid together must undoubtedly sig-

nify, that something is effected for us, and wrought in us, which is intirely owing to the power and grace of GOD.

I shall speedily endeavour to guard against any false and ill consequences, that men may be tempted to draw from hence; but in the mean time it must be maintained,.....that regeneration is the work of the HOLY SPIRIT. There is one passage in the 1st of John's Gospel, the 13th, that does expressly deny any other agency in this matter. *Which were born*, says the Evangelist, *not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of* GOD. The meaning of that place is this: To become the *sons* of GOD, we must be *born of him;* and that in such a sort as is not by *blood*, or by any thing communicated to us in our first generation:.....Nor according to the *will of the flesh;* that is, any natural inclinations in ourselves to what is holy and god-like:.....Nor of the *will of man;* that is, the persuasion and influence of others like ourselves: But it is wholly owing to the agency and grace of GOD. So in the 1st of James, the 18th, we are told.....that *of his own will begat he us.* These, with other places that promise *a new*
Ezek. xi. 19. *heart;* and that God *will take away the stony*
Jer. xxiv. 7. *heart out of our flesh; and that he will put his fear into our hearts, and write his law in our*
.....xxxii. 40. *inward parts;* and the declaration, that *it*
Rom. ix. 16. *is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy:* These, I say, and such like texts of scripture, undoubtedly prove that the *change* here called the *second Birth*, is of GOD.

From hence therefore, before we advance any thing farther, we may draw this *conclusion;*.....That since something is to be done *in* us and *for* us, which cannot be done *by* us, we *should be very earnest and unwearied in our application to GOD for his grace and Spirit.* This is evidently the most natural and just way of arguing, however some men may indulge to the quite contrary. There is certainly an *awkwardness* in thinking as well as acting. And when this is encouraged by a slothful temper, or a prejudice against any particular set of men and

their opinions; or when it is supported and improved by the suggestions of the devil, it is hardly to be rectified. For otherwise one would think it impossible that ever the *metaphors*..... of being *created anew*.....*raised to newness of life*,.....and being *born again*, should be pleaded by men, as if they were *literally* to be understood. Which is downright to say.....that an unregenerate man has no *reason*, no *life*, no *being*. The same almighty power and efficacy by which we were made at first, and shall be raised at last, is undoubtedly necessary to our renovation at present; But then upon a conviction of this, we should with the greatest concern apply ourselves to *him* who has this all-sufficient power and grace. Thus we are wont to do in other cases where our interest is concerned; to be very earnest in soliciting such, as have it in their power to do that for us, which we are not able to do for themselves. And this is what the sacred scriptures every where require, and that in the plainest expressions, in the case of regeneration; as I shall have occasion to shew more fully at the close of this chapter.

II. That which is done in us and for us when we are said to be *born again*, I take to be this;.....*the infusing of some inward principle of life and action, to which we are naturally strangers; and by communicating of which, such a life begins, as shall last for ever.*

There is something which so far prevails over all the powers, desires, and relishes of the sensitive and animal nature, as to bring it unto a thorough subjection and subserviency. Hence it is, that a man finds his corrupt inclinations as powerfully crossed, and as effectally kept under, by something *within* himself, as if he was debating the matter with a being *different* from himself. And he therefore acts under the controlling power of something *superior* to himself. If any man that reads this, thinks it unintelligible, I can only assure him in the words of our SAVIOUR, toward the close of his conference with Nicodemus; *Verily, verily, we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, and ye receive not our witness.* Our SAVIOUR knew it by intuition, and observation of what was done

upon *others:* Those that are regenerate know it by experience of what has been done in *themselves:* And, however those that are strangers to this work of grace, may refuse to receive the witness, yet it is nevertheless true and real.

This principle of a new life, I have said is *infused* into us, that it may be *sought* for, and esteemed as something supernatural. It is not only a *habit* of the mind, but the spring and *cause* of every good and gracious habit in us. From hence, probably, a principle of grace is called the *root of the matter;* to signify to us (among other things) that it is really different from the soil in which it is planted: And that it is something brought to us by a divine hand. It is a *root* that would otherwise have remained foreign to our nature, and we should for ever have been barren, and destitute of those *fruits* that are the product of it.

I have chosen to say farther, that *by communicating this principle of grace, such a life begins as shall last for ever,* to put you upon observing this very comfortable propriety in the use of the *metaphor* of being *born again;* namely, our entering into such a state of being, as much better deserves the name of *life,* than that which we are born to in this world. In our *first Birth* we are born to *die;* in our *second,* we are born to *live for ever.* In our *first Birth* we enter upon a manner of existence suited to a changeable and perishing state of things: In our *second Birth* we begin a manner of living suited to an eternal duration and happiness. As, therefore, the new life which hereby we receive, will survive the former, the commencement of it is very fitly call a *new Birth.*

There are *two conclusions* I would draw from hence, for the better and fuller settling of this point.

1. If there be such an inward principle of life and action communicated in our regeneration, it will follow.....*that a mere outward change, and altering the course of our lives, is not sufficient to a person's being born again.*

It is possible a man may be reclaimed from a loose, and vicious way of living, only by external motives and inducements: Or, by changing open and notorious sins, for more secret and concealed ones, there may be a *seeming* alteration, when there is not a *real one:* Or one vice, it may be, is forsaken, in order to fall into another: Or men may be wearied out with their sins; and so are not properly said to leave them, but to *outlive* them. However, this is certain,....That a civil *outward* deportment may be maintained, where there is nothing of the power of religion at the heart. For so the Apost'e Paul tells us (who was far from magnifying any thing in himself before his conversion) that as *touching the law*, Phil. iii. 6. meaning the outward observance of it, *he was blameless*. So that we have abundant reason to keep up the distinction betwixt *restraining* and *renewing* grace.

2. If it be only a new principle of life and action that is infused in regeneration, it will follow,.....*That the new Birth does not give us new, and different natural powers and faculties, from those which we had before.*

As we have the same body and bodily organs; so we have also the same souls and intellectual faculties that we had in our natural state. It is certain, that a change very great passes upon us; but then it is as certain, that we remain physically the *same* afterwards: That is, the principle of life and action which is infused into us, new models our souls, our tempers, and the whole of our behaviour; but it does not alter our make as to any essential part of us. As we have the same eyes, ears, and senses; so we have also the same understanding, will, and affections, that we had in an unregenerate state: But these are all differently used and employed to what they were before. And the change is great enough, to support me in what I have farther to advance under another head of explication; to which I hasten.

III. When we are thus said to be *born again, we do as truly become new creatures, as if we could in a natural sense be born afresh, or had other kind of beings given us.*

There needs no other than the *different* use and exercise of the *same* reasonable powers, to make us either as *Brutes*, or as *Angels*. And indeed, the change would not be so great, to see a clod of earth brighten into a star, since we know that an earthly body can reflect the rays of the sun; as to see a poor brutish sinner become a saint, shining with all the radiant graces of a Christian, and ripening for glory.

Such is the change that is made by the grace and Spirit of GOD in the *new Birth*, that it very much resembles the first creation of this visible world; wherein light was brought out of darkness, and beauty out of deformity, and harmony out of confusion. For so the mind in regeneration is enlightned; and all its jarring disorderly passions and affections are brought under rule and government. Those powers and capacities that lay wholly unexercised and unactive, are now taught to exert themselves. And those that were busied in a fruitless, or a hurtful manner, now are exalted to the most useful and comfortable employments. In the Apostle's comprehensive language, *all old things are passed away, and all things are become new.*

The distinction indeed between the regenerate and unregenerate, is not at present visible enough to convince the world of common spectators, that it is *so great* as really it is: But at the day of judgment, when those things that are now hid shall be revealed, the difference shall be manifested to all. He that looks only on the rough surface of the seas, and observes the mire and dirt which is cast out by its waves, may imagine there is nothing amiable and desirable in it: But he that has dived to its bottom, and discovered the jewels and treasures which lie buried there, will form a very different judgment. The man that is renewed, is greatly enriched by the gifts and graces of the Spirit of GOD; but yet there may be no beauty or excellency that shall appear to such as look no farther than the outside, and observe only the corruptions that arise in his outward actions and conversation: But when things that now lie hid shall be discovered, it will be quite otherwise. Hence it is that we read so often in scripture of the *world's not knowing*

such as belong to CHRIST: And St. John speaking of those that were *now* the *sons of* GOD, adds that *it does not appear what we shall be.* 1 John iii. 2.

This, however, must be maintained; That where things are spiritually discerned, and where there is a close and strict enquiry into the character of him that is said to be *born again*, he does appear even at present *more excellent than his neighbour;* and such an one *knows himself* to be quite another person, than he was in his first and natural state. He has a new *image* and likeness stamped upon him, which grows more and more visible, both to himself, and all about him: His behaviour and conversation will be such, as to *shew forth the virtues*, and excellencies, of *Him who hath called him.*

Now from this head two things are deducible.

1. That a pretended *honouring the grace of* GOD, *and a presumptuous confidence in it, whilst men go on in their sins, will by no means argue that they are in a state of grace.*

Men's *changing* their opinions, or getting *new* notions in religion, will not prove that they are *born again*, if their lives and actions be not changed, so as to render them quite other persons than they were in their natural and corrupt state. This is so obvious, that I should not so much as have mentioned it, had I not met with instances of those, who have pretended to talk of *free grace* at such a rate, as if they hoped to be *saved* by it, when they were utter strangers to the *renewing power* of it. And some there are, who have distinguished themselves by a set of principles, whereby they pretend to magnify the riches of GOD's grace in its abounding *towards* them, when at the same time it has no suitable effect and influence *upon* them. As if, by a decree in their favour, GOD had engaged himself at all adventures to bring them to heaven, whether they were made *fit* for it or not; Or as if they thought miraculous grace would prepare them for it some *new way*, and not by the ordinary appointed means of the gospel. For, if they would receive the assurances of grace as they are settled

in the gospel, they would never pretend to an interest in the LORD JESUS CHRIST, without such a change as I am speaking of: Since 'tis as express as words can make it, *if any man be in* CHRIST, *he is a new creature.* Those persons then will find themselves miserably mistaken, who, instead of being really changed, trust to some ineffectual speculations: These will not avail them at last, how much soever at present they may be pleased with them, or how zealous soever they may appear for them.

2 Cor. v. 17.

2. For the same reason it will also follow.....That no *gifts or attainments, how great and eminent soever they be, will pass for this new Birth, if there be not a new life.*

Judas, with all his gifts, was but a lost man. Simon Magus, notwithstanding all the wonders which history says he wrought, yet had neither *part nor lot in this matter;* his heart and life being unchanged and unrenewed. What the Apostle says of *charity*, must be said of this *change:* Though I had all *languages* that have been spoken by men, yea, though I had the *tongue of an angel;* and with these the intellectual abilities of men and angels too; though *I could understand all mysteries* and sciences; though I had the *faith of such as could work miracles;* or was ready to *impoverish* myself *in giving alms to the poor;* yea, though I might give my *body to be burned*, as a martyr to the best cause in the world; yet if I am not *a new creature* all will avail me nothing. I heartily wish that such as are valuing themselves upon their attainments in *human learning*, or upon their *outward profession* of religion, and their *sufferings* in common with others on account of their profession, would allow themselves to enter into such a way of thinking as this. And whilst some are valuing themselves upon their conformity to the national church; and others upon their strict adherence to what they apprehend the purer worship and appointments of the gospel; it were well if both would lay to heart such a text as that,.....*Neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature*, Gal. vi. 15.

Acts viii. 21.

1 Cor. xiii. *beginning.*

IV. *This being born again, is in some respect like our being born at first, instantaneous and perfect; but, in other respects, regeneration may be looked upon as gradual and progressive.*

When first a man is said to be born from above, he has every principle of grace and goodness, that is necessary to constitute him a child of GOD: Tho' as yet all is but in miniature, and very inconsiderable, compared with what it may, in time, grow to. The new creature is formed not like a *statue*, in the making of which one limb or feature may be carved out and compleated, whilst all the rest lie shapeless, and in the rough stone: But it is formed like a *child* that is born into the world, which has all the parts of the human body at first, though very small and little, and must have time to grow to their full size and perfection. Those that are *born of the Spirit* have the divine image and likeness, as to every essential part, drawn upon the soul; but yet they are capable of continual improvements, till they become perfect *as their Father which is in heaven is perfect.*

Hence it is that the Apostle teaches us by his own example, not to take up an opinion of ourselves, that our attainments are sufficient as soon as we are thus renewed. Though we could say, with him, that *what things* formerly *were gain* to us, *those we* now *count loss for* CHRIST; yea, (that we are so much altered from what we were in our natural state) that we *count all things* (even the best and greatest in the world) but *loss for the excelleccy of the knowledge of* CHRIST JESUS our LORD; yet we are not to look upon ourselves as already *perfect:* But this we are farther to do, *forgetting the things that are behind, to reach forth unto those things which are before.* *ver.* 13. And another Apostle calls upon us to *grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour* JESUS CHRIST, 2 *Pet.* iii. 18. Phil. iii. 8.

This, I thought proper to make a distinct head, for the sake of these *two* conclusions:

1. *There can be no state betwixt that of the regenerate, and the unregenerate.*

Whatever preparations there may be for such a change, yet these are certainly to be distinguished from the change itself. All men are either born again, or not; there is no middle state that can be allowed: For that would infer, if any died in such a state, that they were disposed of accordingly in the other world; and appointed to some intermediate place betwixt heaven and hell. Which is a notion I need not stay to expose. There is something of more immediate consequence to be guarded against, which I had chiefly in my eye, upon the mention of this head; namely, to prevent men's taking up with any of those things that are *preparatory* to this new birth, as if they were *really to pass for it*. Hence it is, that many have been carried into very sad and destructive mistakes; who have imagined, that some short-liv'd *convictions*, and ineffectual purposes and *resolutions*, might pass for this change; or that some *partial* regards to their *duty*, which have arisen from their first serious impressions, have been sufficient to denominate them *new creatures*. And so resting in what has been only *preparatory*, they have at last fallen even from *that*.

2. *There may be such as are truly regenerate and born again, that are yet very weak in grace, and very little in their spiritual stature.*

'Tis possible such a *change* may be *wrought* upon men, when yet the *infant state* of the new creature may hardly discover that it is so. However, if any man be really passed from *death* to *life*, this life will shew itself by growing every day more vigorous and active: And if any man be passed from *darkness* to *light*, this *light*, though very dim at present, will *shine more and more unto a perfect day*. But for this reason we should not rely on any thing that *has been done* for us, so as to grow secure or negligent, upon an apprehension that all is safe and well; for if

Prov. iv. 18.

what has been wrought in us be indeed of GOD, it will be continually advancing till it comes to perfection.
As for GOD, *his work is perfect.* This work of our regeneration is so: Perfect at first, in every essential *part;* and therefore fixes in us a regard to *all* GOD's commandments: And perfect at last, in every attainable *degree;* and therefore makes our *growth* and improvement necessary. Deut. xxxii. 4.

V. *This change, which is called the new Birth, may be, and commonly is, effected by the outward means of grace.*

As in the 3d of John, we are said to be *born of the Spirit;* so in the epistle of James, regeneration is ascribed to the *word of* GOD. And in the former place we read of being *born of water*, [that is, by Baptism] as well as the *Spirit.* 'Tis certain that outward ordinances and appointments are, of *themselves*, insufficient to produce such an effect; but it is as certain, from the whole current of scripture, that the SPIRIT OF GOD does make use of such *means*, and ordinarily renews the heart in and by these.

There have been, indeed, miraculous productions of this kind; and GOD has sometimes manifested himself to those that *enquired not after him;* yea, to those who, with a *persecuting blasphemous* temper of mind, have set themselves *against him:* But such cases are to be looked upon, just in the same manner as we do upon the miraculous cure of diseases; or a miraculous supply of bodily wants, which some, upon *extraordinary* occasions, have obtained. Such miracles, both of grace and providence, were necessary to the first settling of Christianity in the world: And they may be wrought again whenever, and wherever, it pleases GOD suddenly to restore and advance the credit of decayed religion. But I think these cases should no more be taken into our common accounts of regeneration, than the removing of the most *inveterate* distempers with a *word*, or the feeding of *five thousand* with *five loaves and two fishes*, are to be taken into the usual method of healing our diseases, or providing our daily bread.

That man would certainly be accounted very inconsiderate, and vain in his expectations, that should sit still and refuse to seek after and provide his necessary food; because he reads that Elijah was *fed by ravens*, and the *clouds rained down manna on the Israelites*. And is it not every whit as wild and unjustifiable, for men to neglect the means of grace, and expect to be converted by some miraculous *appearance of* CHRIST from heaven, because the Apostle Paul was so? or to promise themselves that they shall be renewed *suddenly* on their *death-bed*, because the *thief* on the *cross* was suddenly changed in his last moments?

He that can be so wretchedly misled, as in this last case, may as well advance one step farther, and promise himself that he shall go to *heaven* without seeing *death*; because he reads of one, that in a *fiery chariot* was taken up thither. Yea, I will venture to say, that on this account, he has *more* reason to expect a translation, than he has to look for such a miraculous renovation: Because he has *two* instances of persons being taken to heaven without dying; (viz. Enoch and Elias); but he has only *one* instance in the whole Bible, of a conversion so extraordinary as that of the *crucified malefactor*.

Let the *new Birth* I have been explaining, be looked upon then, as a change that is generally wrought by the outward and ordinary means of grace. And let it be considered, that there is no case in which those means would fail of obtaining such an end, could we procure the blessing of GOD in and with them.

From hence we may safely conclude,

1. *That men ought to apply themselves, with great diligence, to these appointed means.*

As we learn from what has been said, that none should encourage themselves to hope for extraordinary grace, in the neglect of the common and ordinary method of salvation; so no man can reasonably hearken to despondent thoughts, whilst he does, in a way of duty, cry to GOD for renewing grace and

mercy. *What means* are to be used, and *what method* we are to take in our applications to GOD, I shall lay before you in the 3d chapter: My business here, is only to establish this conclusion,....That we ought to look upon the *new Birth*, as a change that *may be* attained by us; and so to seek after it with suitable concern and diligence.

And if this was not really the case, wherefore should God call upon those that are in a state of corruption, to *cast away from them all their trangressions, and to make them new hearts and new spirits?* Ezek. xviii. 31. Wherefore should he declare with so much solemnity, *As I live I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live?* Ch. xxxiii. 11. And then, wherefore should he call after sinners with so much importunity, *Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?* Wherefore should our SAVIOUR put men upon *striving to enter in at the strait gate?* Matth. vii. 7. And bids us *ask*, *seek*, and *knock;* assuring us that God *gives the Spirit* to them that believingly and importunately *ask him?* Luke xi. 13. Wherefore should one apostle urge us, *to work out our salvation with fear and trembling?* Philip. ii. 12. and another, *to draw nigh to GOD*, as one that is willing and ready to *draw nigh to us?* James iv. 8. Wherefore, I say, should these scriptures, and many others of the like import, speak to us in such a manner, if the change I have described, were not attainable in the use of ordinary means?

But possibly it may be said, can a man do any thing toward his own *Birth*, or *Creation*, or *Resurrection*, by all which this change is described? To this it is readily answered, that we are actually called upon so to do. *Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and* CHRIST *shall give thee life.* Eph. v. 14. Metaphors are generally made use of in scripture with some *one* considerable view; and to give light in some particular matter, for the sake of which they are produced; but it is a manifest wrong to the design of them,

to stretch them to every thing which a brisk and warm imagination may suggest. Suppose as to this very point, that you explain a man's being *dead in sin*, to signify his being able to do no more, than a man *naturally dead*, is to revive himself: When you have done so, carry this explication of the *metaphor* to another *text*, and see how far it is from being true and agreeable there. Such as are alive to God, are said Rom. vi. 2. to be *dead to sin*, which according to the sense just mentioned, must denote,....That such are no more able to do a sinful action, than a dead body is to move or stir.* And if there are any that will not own this to be a false-

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* Dead in trespasses and sins, an unregenerate man can as little do any thing preparatory to the new Birth as produce it. But enjoying natural, though destitute of spiritual life, in many instances, sinners might act otherwise than they do. This is happily illustrated by the author, Chap. iv. § 2. Especially they should be careful to apply diligently to the means of divine appointment, which Christ has promised to countenance and bless. Assiduous application to these means is a duty which never can be too much inculcated, or too carefully performed. And when a conscientious performance is aimed at, it is more than probable that with the sinner, as with the poor impotent man at Bethesda, all shall be well at last. Instead of effecting a cure, he could not even put himself into the waters, and, till troubled, they were as inefficacious as any common stream; still, however, he waited, and when he could find no means nor ability to go to health,....health came to him.

But it must always be remembered,....that the soul is passive in regeneration;....that the connection between the most diligent use of the appointed means and the end....regeneration or salvation, is neither *natural* nor *necessary*, but *absolutely dependent on the divine blessing*. After we have done all, an attainment which few, if any, pretend to, we are unprofitable servants. Duty is ours; salvation is wholly of grace. But considering the rich grace of God in his kind invitations and precious promises, these things should rather encourage than discourage poor sinners.

hood, they must blot that text out of the Bible, *There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good, and sinneth not:* And at the same time, they must talk against all the observation and experience in the world. Eccl. vii. 20.

In obviating the objection to the use of means which is urged from man's being spiritually dead, the author's language is rather dark and inaccurate. His observation concerning scripture metaphors is true and deserves attention, but in the present case is rather misapplied. The particular truth which the metaphors alluded to are designed to inculcate is,....Man's utter inability to put forth any exertions which can have the least efficiency to produce or even prepare for his regeneration. But this by no means either cancels or diminishes his obligation to duty. Being a moral agent he is under the strongest obligations to obey the Most High. But though without power to produce a supernatural change, calls to use the means, and endeavours, on the sinners part, are neither useless nor without advantage.

Like the gospel call at large, every particular call to sinners, and among others that, Eph. v. 14. *Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give the life*, points out duty, exhibits privilege, and is the great mean appointed by GOD to be the vehicle of that life which dead sinners need, but cannot produce. Tabernacling in the flesh JESUS said to the young man and maid ARISE, and to Lazarus after he had been some days in the grave, COME FORTH. In some such manner, and with similar effect, he addresses the dead sinner in the day of effectual calling. He says, Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead. With the call he conveys power and communicates life. Then is accomplished that emphatic promise, *The DEAD shall hear the voice of the Son of GOD, and shall live.*.....Besides, as the gospel is the ministration of the Spirit, HE often communicates certain influences which excite, and in some degree enable, gospel hearers to do many things, and these even gladly; but instead of cherishing and improving his influences, many neglect and quench them, and provoke the holy Spirit to depart.

But dropping all metaphors, it is farther objected against the plain and express scriptures I have quoted....That our SAVIOUR tells us plainly, whilst there are *many* that strive to enter in at the strait gate, yet there are *few* that find it. And again, he says expressly, *that no man can come unto him, except the Father draw him.* And the apostle tells us, That it is God who *worketh in us both to will, and to do, of his own good pleasure.*

John vi. 44.

To which I think the answer is very obvious. When these and the foregoing places are compared together, they amount evidently to this, and no more: *We* must *work*, because God *works in us*, and *with* us; *we* must go to CHRIST by the *grace* of God *assisting* and *enabling* us; and we must *strive* in a believing expectation of God's accomplishing our desires; because those that have made attempts, without this dependence on him, and help from him, have been disappointed and baffled. And that leads to a

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It is true a regenerate person is dead to sin and cannot live in it, Rom. vi. 2. And yet commits sin in thought word and deed every day. But from a renewed man's committing sin; we cannot argue that an unrenewed man either can or will perform any thing spiritually good. Both are dead....the one *to* sin and the other *in* it. In an unrenewed man there is but ONE principle; in the believer there are TWO,....contrary in their nature, incessantly opposing one another, and absolutely irreconcileable. These are denominated *Flesh* and *Spirit*, the *Law in the members* and *of the mind*, and the *Old* and *New Man*. Every believer may and should join with the Apostle when with the greatest propriety he designates his own character from that internal principle which was the most powerful and permanent, saying as in Rom. vii. 20. *Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but SIN that dwelleth in me*.....The moment the old man is thoroughly rooted out, the saint will be as incapable of sinning and as averse to it, as the natural man is to perform any duty spiritually good.

EDITOR.

2d Conclusion, *That for the success of all means, and the effecting this happy change of the new Birth, our reliance must be on* GOD, *and him alone.*

We must make the best *use* we can, of all outward helps and advantages, but we must not *trust* to these: 'Tis GOD alone that can give a principle of new life; (concerning which I have spoken very fully in the beginning of this discourse); and therefore we should take care to fix all our hope on him. *Grace* is the gift of GOD, as well as *glory;* and should be sought for and esteemed as a *gift*, in what way soever it may be bestowed. If any *means* had been sufficient of themselves, to work such a change in men, it must have been the preaching and miracles of JESUS CHRIST, when he was here upon earth: and yet we find, those that allowed him to speak *as never man spake;* and were sensible that he proved his words, by such *works as never man did*, notwithstanding such convictions, turned away and forsook him. But afterwards, when God sent his Spirit to work upon the hearts of men, in and with the preaching of the gospel, we read of *thousands* converted at a time. Yea, those very administrations, which men of wit and learning have scorned and derided, have yet by the mighty power of God, produced such effects as the wisest and greatest might be glad to own.

To sum up all therefore in a little; we are taught to pray, *Turn us, O* Lord! *and then we shall be turned, for thou art the* Lord *our* God. And the more I am convinced, that this change is of God; the more earnestly, and importunately, should I cry unto him that *performeth all things for me.* Lam. v. 21.

Here, reader! stay a while; review the heads of what thou hast been reading; and say, if thou can'st, that this doctrine of the *new Birth* is a doctrine not to be understood. I am very sensible indeed, that after all my care to explain it, in the most orderly and affecting manner I could; yet if the *good Spirit* of GOD is not pleased to give thee a discerning mind, and

if he does not *open* thine *eyes* to see the evidence and importance of what has been suggested to thee, it will be of very little service. But if God does graciously concur with these endeavours, he can render them as useful to *thee*, as they have been to some *others:* And however inconsiderable they may seem in themselves, this will stamp a value upon them.

" Thus may it please thee, *O Father of lights!* to *enlighten* " *those that sit in darkness*, and in the region of *the shadow of* " *death: Give* them *the knowledge of salvation*, *for the remis-* " *sion of* their *sins*, and so let the *day spring from on high vis-* " *it* their souls. One ray from thee, blessed GOD! would make " day in the most benighted breast. Be thou, therefore, the " teacher of those that are yet ignorant of thee, and of their " way to thee; and bring them out of their natural and sinful " *darkness*, into thy *marvellous light*."

CHAP. II.

Wherein it is proved, that to be Born again is necessary to Salvation.

I HAD thought, after the *explaining* of this change which our SAVIOUR calls our being *born again*, to have added next the *means* of attaining it: But when I considered, how little agreeable what is advanced would be to the taste of the *present age;* and that, in preaching on this subject, I had met with a very cold reception, from such as I was particularly desirous to have made some good impressions upon; it then appeared highly requisite, immediately to prove the importance and necessity of this doctrine of the *new birth*.

And could I now speak with a voice that should reach the whole world, I would proclaim it,....." That whatever na- " tion men are of, or whatever party they belong to, and what-

" ever their figure or characters may be here on earth, *Except* " *they be born again, they shall not see the kingdom of God.*' It is at thy peril, man! whoever thou art, that hearest or readest these words, if thou darest to shew s disgust, or even a disregard to them. This *text* stands in thy *Bible*, as with a hand pointing to it; and a double seal, [*verily, verily,*] set upon it; that declares it one of the *unalterable edicts* of heaven. Let the *profaneness* of the world, or the vain religion of the world suggest what they will, if thou art not *born again*, thou art not in a *state of salvation.*

Our SAVIOUR'S words are very positive, and they are very plain too.

Seeing and *enjoying God*, *seeing* and *entering into* his kingdom, are in scripture language the same thing. And the *kingdom of God*, you know, is frequently to be understood of the *Gospel state*, or the kingdom of grace; and also of the *heavenly state*, or the kingdom of glory. So that the full meaning of our Lord's assertion must be this;.....*Except a man be born again*, he cannot be accounted a *true christian* in *this world*,..... nor be admitted into the *society* of the *blessed spirits above.*

These things, I shall set myself distinctly to prove. O that I might hope for such success in this attempt, as that none, who read or hear what I have to say, might deceive themselves with a *false name*, or a *false hope*; that is, calling themselves *Christians*, or expecting the *happiness* of such, whilst they are strangers to this *new Birth.*

I. I shall establish the truth of this assertion,.....*That no man can be a real christian, except he be thus changed and renewed.* For,

1. Without this, there cannot be an *accepting of* JESUS CHRIST, *as our teacher* and *instuctor.*

'Tis mockery to call him our *master* or *leader*, if we are not willing to be *taught* by him. And 'tis in vain that we profess to receive *some things* from him, if we do not subscribe to the *whole* of his instructions and revelations. Now then, consider it,....our SAVIOUR insists upon this as the *first* thing to be learnt and understood by Nicodemus, when he addressed him as a *teacher* come from God. It is a matter of such importance, in our professing christianity, to be *born again*, that 'tis necessary to prepare us for the reception *of all the other* doctrines of the gospel. If the natural pride, sensuality, and hardness of our hearts be not removed, we shall never be brought to a right understanding of the method of salvation by a Redeemer; nor to a due submission to the disposals of providence; nor indeed to any regular submission to the *Father of Spirits*, so as to have a just and prevailing sense of our obligations to him. However, therefore, men may compliment CHRIST, by calling him MASTER and LORD; or rather think to do honour to *themselves*, by professing to be his *followers* and *disciples:* yet in truth and reality they *reject* him, when they disregard a doctrine that he has made the leading and principal one in his religion. What is this, but in effect to make void the *whole gospel;* and to weaken the force of every *other* doctrine, so as to hinder its proper influence upon us?

To this, undoubtedly to this, is owing the unsuccessfulness of preaching, in a great measure at this day. Though the other doctrines of the gospel may be set in the clearest light; though holiness, in its several branches, may be pressed with great warmth and seriousness, and with those arguments that one would think irresistible; yet we find, that the knowledge of men, and their strongest convictions, in many cases serve only to *condemn*, not to sanctify or *reform* them. How many are there, who can readily rehearse the several articles of their *Creed;* and are convinced, it is their duty to observe God's *commandments;* who, for all this, live, and act just as men would do, that believed and acknowledged no such things? Whereas if men were thoroughly instructed concerning the *necessity* of their being born again; and were taught to conceive

aright of a principle of new life being derived from above; and would be persuaded, in the first and chief place, to seek for the renewing converting influences of the blessed SPIRIT; all other matters both of faith and practice, would then become intelligible, affecting, and easy: And the whole scheme of Christianity would appear a quite different thing, to what 'tis generally esteemed. But without this, we cannot be said to receive CHRIST as our Prophet and Teacher: and therefore in vain call ourselves by his name, or to pretend to be his disciples.

2. *Except a man be born again*, he cannot be interested in the *death of Christ*, as making *atonement and satisfaction for him*.

We are told, that for this end CHRIST both *died and rose again*.....that he might be a PATTERN to us of *dying to sin, and being made alive unto God:* Or according to another way of expression, that our *old man might be crucified with him;* and that we might *be raised with him to walk in newness of life*. But now this *design* of our SAVIOUR'S death is *lost*, if we be not in such a sense conformed to him.

Rom. vi. 10, 11.

Rom. vi. 4. & 6. *compared.*

Yea, if we consider his death as a PROPITIATION *for sin*, it will be unavailable to our souls, except we are thus renewed. According to that common distinction, CHRIST died to save us *from* our sins, not *in* them. And his death, *without* us, will not avail us, if there be not also this work of the SPIRIT *within* us. 'Tis not enough, that *satisfaction* is made for sin; if we are not also delivered by almighty grace from the *reigning power* of it. What would it signify to a condemned criminal, to have a pardon procured for him, if at the same time he was sick of a *mortal distemper?* Except his disease be healed, as well as the sentence of death taken away, 'tis in vain to promise him life. So, notwithstanding the purchase of pardon by JESUS CHRIST, if the distemper of which we are a-dying be not also removed, we are undone for ever. Let the value of a Re-

deemer's blood be ever so great, in the sight of GOD ; yet, if it is not applied for healing and cleansing unto us, we shall be never the better for it. And therefore, except we are *born again*, Christ cannot be a *Saviour* to us.* However we may now be *called* by *his name*, yet hereafter he will profess unto all that are unregenerate, *I never knew you.*

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* Regeneration and justification are inseparable. All who are favoured with the one, enjoy the other. Whatever may be said concerning priority of order, there can be no difference in respect of time. The hour of effectual calling is an eventful hour indeed. A great work is accomplished in a short time. The dead is quickened, the guilty pardoned, the outcast accepted, and the diseased in a great measure healed.

But though inseparable, regeneration can neither be the cause nor condition of justification. Instead of this, the new birth is in consequence of the satisfaction which Christ has made to Divine Justice in his atonement. This glorious change is a work never performed independent of the death of Christ, but as a necessary part of that admirable plan by which those for whom Christ died are to be completely saved.

Of course, he who is pardoned is certainly renewed, and cannot die of a mortal distemper. But in healing the diseased sinner, justification has its share as well as sanctification. In his natural condition, man has a complication of disorders. He is confined in prison and in fetters,....he is scourged by his enemies, and labours under a mortal disease. About to cure him, the good Physician in the same hour disarms his enemies and knocks off his fetters,....binds up his wounds and applies sovereign medicine. .....No wounds are so deep as these made on the soul by sin, and these are *healed by Christs stripes*, Isaiah, liii. 5. The Redeemer heals the *bruises* and *wounds* of conscience by the *pardon of sin*, and the *sores* of the soul by *sanctification*. In the beautiful language of Isaiah (Chap. xxxiii. 24.) the reason why the inhabitants in Sion say no more, I AM SICK, is *because* the people that dwell therein are forgiven their

3 *No man can acknowledge the sovereignty and dominion of Christ, as the gospel requires, unless such a change be wrought in him:* And without this no man can be a *real christian.*

It is by this means, that our Lord has appointed subjects to be gathered, and members to be admitted into this kingdom. Hence it is, that those who belong to him, are said to be *called and chosen out of the world,* Col. iii. 3, 4. and to have *a life hid with* Christ in God; and so when Christ, *who is their life shall appear, then shall they also appear with him in glory.* It is by being *born again,* that the throne of a Redeemer is fixed in the hearts of men: and by this alone they are brought into a perfect subjection to his method of ruling them. *His kingdom is not of this world;* nor his manner of governing suited to the forms of government here. It is an argument of very great ignorance, or something worse, for men to account themselves, or pretend to make others, the subjects of Christ's kingdom, merely, because of their outward conformity to the institutions of his worship, and their complying with a particular form of church government. Nothing less than a thorough change, and renovation of the heart and mind, can translate a man from the kingdom and power of Satan, to the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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iniquity. When the starving prodigal began to eat, to drink, and be merry, and feast on the fatted calf, he was greatly nourished and cherished, comforted and cured; but these effects were in part produced by the gracious acceptance given him by his Father, when he saw him yet a great way off and ran and kissed him.

Two things, however, must never be forgotten: first, that it is not in consequence of Regeneration that Christ becomes our Saviour; it is because he is our Saviour previously to Regeneration and Justification that we are either born of the Spirit or justified by GOD: secondly, nevertheless without the new Birth, and some satisfactory evidences of it, no man has a right to conclude that he is interested in the atonement made by Christ for sin. EDITOR.

On this account, as well as others before-mentioned, our Saviour might justly reproach Nicodemus, that he should be a Ruler in Israel, and yet appear so insensible of the vast *change* it must make in a man to pass from *one kingdom* and *government to another*. Whenever any stranger came to settle amongst the Jews, the alteration both of his *maxims* and *manners* was *so* great, that one would have expected Nicodemus should readily conceive of the alteration that must be made in such as became the subjects of Christ's kingdom: Which being a *spiritual kingdom*, must needs differ exceedingly from all the kingdoms of *this world:* and so must require a very different spirit and turn of mind, in those that are called to act in it.

In the gospel scheme of government there are so many things not only above *natural* reason, but *contrary* to the dictates of *corrupt* reason, that a principle of spiritual divine life must necessarily gain the ascendency, before such rules of conduct and behaviour can be duly observed. For example; we are required to prefer the interest of a Redeemer, and his religion in the world, above all our *enjoyments and relations;* yea, above *life* itself. We are therefore farther required to be *patient* under *sufferings* and *afflictions;* to be *watchful and constant* in our *devotions;* to *forgive* our *enemies;* to endeavour after their *conversion* and *reformation;* and to *relieve*, as we have ability and opportunity, the *necessities* of the *poor*. Now let us by these and such like things try how far any person in a *natural corrupt state* is like to be obedient to Christ, and to live in subjection to him; and we shall soon find, that these are things so contrary to us, as not to be complied with till we are *born again*. We are naturally fond of life, and the outward comforts of it; apt to fret at every thing that is troublesome and painful to us, averse to prayer, hearing, reading, and the exercises of religion; full of resentment against such as offend us; and ready to despise and turn away from those that are in mean and distressed circumstances: so that except we are *changed*, and made *new creatures*, we shall never submit to such rules of conduct as these are.

Luke xiv. 26.
Luke xxi. 19. with the context.
1 Pet. iv. 7.
Matth. v. 44.
Rom. xii. 20.
Gal. vi. 10.

Put all together, and then ask yourselves; can that man be a *christian*, that neither learns of Christ as a *teacher;* nor is interested in him as a *Saviour?* nor can be subject to him as a *King?* I wonder men are not ashamed of the falsehood of those pretensions, that are so apparently different from their real characters: Or that any man can satisfy himself with a profession of christianity, who has no regard to the *import* of such a profession, and the obligations under which it lays him.

But the *formal christian* will say, Do not I perform the *duties* of religion, and attend upon the *worship* of God, according to the direction of the gospel? yea, do not I comply with that *peculiar institution* of a crucified SAVIOUR, to eat and drink at a *communion-table?* Which many, concerning whom we may hope well, do not yet go so far as to do: And can I, after all this, be thought unworthy of the name of a *christian?*

To such I answer; that you have indeed a claim to the sacred *name*, and to all the *outward privileges* of christians; and you are looked upon as such by us: But at the same time, you may appear quite otherwise in the esteem and account of Almighty God.

The outward performance of religious duties, however it may entitle us to the good opinion of men, yet it cannot avail us in the sight of God, if there be not such an *attention*, such an *affection*, and such a *steadiness* and *perseverance*, as the gospel requires: in all which, the services of these men will be found faulty, who are strangers to the *new Birth*.

The natural man who is destitute of a principle of divine life, has no such concern about the *spirituality* of his worship, and the *fixedness* of his *heart* in religious exercises; as the man that is savingly changed, and renewed, is acted by. An external devotion is what such a one contents himself with, altho' it goes no farther than a *lip-service*, or a *bodily exercise*. Isa. xxix. 13

Hence it comes to pass, that the spirit is *cold* and *unaffected;* and knows nothing of that fervour, and exceeding pleasure, which the real christian is frequently transported with. Have I not seen two persons joining in the same prayer, or hearing the same sermon, yet as distant in the frame of their minds, as heaven and earth? One trifling, and rambling with his eyes and his thoughts, after a thousand vanities; when he that has been next him, has thought himself at the very gate of heaven? One sleeping, a *second* setting himself against what is said; when another, in the same seat, has been eagerly catching every word that has been spoken; and has thought that what he heard, was enough to command his attention for ever? Such is the difference converting grace makes.

Farther; he that is in an unregenerate state, is soon *weary* of every good work. He is glad of excuses to put by, or make short, every exercise of a religious nature: and is ready, upon any pressing occasion, to throw off all. *Will the*
Job xxvii. 10. *hypocrite always call upon God?* If it be for his gain, or preferment, or if it appear necessary for the securing what he has, he can wholly *lay aside* his thoughts of religion; or, in the most material points, can *alter* them. He is ready to do either, as the times and his circumstances require. Whereas the real christian
1 Cor. xv. 58. is one that is *stedfast* and *unmoveable; always abounding in the work of the Lord.* He that is *born again*, is endued with a principle, that will carry him through all trials; and render him superior to all oppositions; and enable him to conquer all temptations; (I mean, as to the final issue of them); which can be said of no other man.

Since, therefore, men may attend upon *Sacraments*, as well as other parts of religious worship, without a becoming temper and disposition of mind; these are only to be looked upon, as external *badges* of christianity, not as certain *evidences* of it. And from our own observation we are assured,..... that sacramental vows and promises are very little minded, in the *making*, and much less in the *keeping* of them, by some,

that frequent those solemnities. Or if, at such times, there may be something of a more than ordinary seriousness; yet, by one temptation or other, we very often see those sacred bonds broken; and persons give themselves a loose to act, as if they had never come under such obligations.

So that upon the whole, it can be no breach of charity to say, that many are enrolled among the number of communicants, whose *names are not written in the book of life.* And therefore, there is a great deal of difference betwixt a man's being allowed to pass for a christian, *now;* and his being found really such, *at last;* without which, he cannot be admitted into heaven.

But before I set myself to enlarge on that, it is very fit to add; That even *at present*, the distinguishing privileges and blessings of the *real* christian are such, as these *nominal* christians intermeddle not with: it may be said concerning them, with reference to these *privileges*, that they have *neither part nor lot in the matter.*

The grand blessing of the gospel is, *peace* with God: but it is impossible to obtain this, if we are not made *new creatures.* The favour* of God is indeed the *purchase* of CHRIST; but it

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* If by the favour of God is meant his eternal purpose of love to sinners, or that grace which is IN HIMSELF, instead of being purchased by Christ, Christ himself is the fruit of it, and that gift in which, above all others, the love of the Father is illustriously displayed. God *commendeth* his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.....There neither is nor can be any preparation for an interest in this love.

Christ did not suffer and die either to render God gracious, or prepare sinners for his favour; but he died because God, while determined to maintain the honour of his justice, had a purpose of love, and was resolved to be gracious;.....and that these who were

is what none shall be interested in, that are not *prepared* for it. He will never present any to the Father, as objects of his special love, till they are fit to be presented to him. We must be restored to the *likeness* of the Deity, or we can never be restored to his complacential *love*. Hence it is that the *new Birth*, by which we are *created again in the image of God*, becomes necessary to our being qualified for the marks of his special favour.

Another very high privilege of the gospel, is our *union* and *communion* with *Christ*. We are made *one with him*, and derive all our supplies from him: Which we cannot possibly be, except the *same mind be in us, which was also in Christ Jesus*. All the members of his *body* must, in some measure, be conformed to their *head*. Unless we should suppose, that this mystical body is like the *image* of Nebuchadnezzar; the head *gold*, but the feet *iron* and *clay*. And then what must become of such a text as that, *Be ye holy, for I am holy?* Or where would be the just reasoning of that other place, *What communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial?* 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15.

Farther; we cannot have *peace* in our own *consciences*, nor obtain a settled composed temper of mind, without such a change; this is necessary to remove our confusions, our guilt, our fears, and our reigning corruptions.

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the objects of his love might enjoy the fruits of it to all eternity..... Had it not been for the favour of God, Redemption had never been contrived, nor Christ chosen and constituted the Saviour. *But God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish but have everlasting life:* which declaration *now should*, and sooner or later *will*, make all who know the GIFT of God make these words the burden of their song, *Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.*

There is an essential difference between God's love of good will to sinners, and the complacency he has in such as are conformed to his image. EDITOR.

And then again; those *joys* and consolations that proceed from the good Spirit of God, are only to be expected as consequent upon his *renewing* influences and operations. Where he is not a *converting*, he will not be a *comforting* Spirit.

Now let him that readeth, understand: And if he does so, I am persuaded, he must be convinced, that no man can be a *real christian*, except he be *born again*. Without this, he cannot perform the duties of religion aright; nor can he be interested in the peculiar and most desirable privileges of christianity: and therefore whatever he may seem to *be*, or to *do*, in the eye of the world; he neither *is*, nor *does*, what God requires and expects from him. So that however he may pass for a christian at *present*, he shall not be admitted to the happiness of such at *last*. This I am now to insist on, by shewing,

II. *That no man shall enter into the kingdom of God above, or dwell in his glorious presence in heaven, unless he be born again.*

And here let me afresh summon the attention of him that hears or reads. If what has been said already, has made no suitable impressions; yet something may now possibly be offered, that shall find a *nearer* and *quicker* way to thy heart.

May I not suppose it is a pleasure to thee, to hear of heaven? And that thou art, sometimes, ready to *talk* of it too? Nay, is not the *hope of being saved*, become a familiar expression in all parts of thy conversation? What, if after all the pleasing things thou hast heard of that blissful place, and all thy presumptuous hope of arriving at it, thou shouldest never come there? Canst thou bear such a thought, without being startled and concerned? Well, I am now in plain terms to assure thee, that except thou art renewed and *born again*, thou shalt *never enter into heaven*.

1. Thy LORD and SAVIOUR *has most expresly declared*

this, and his faithfulness stands engaged to make it good.

Besides the *text* I am upon, and the repetition of the same thing a little after; it is made as indispensably necessary to salvation, in other places of scripture, as in these, Matth. xviii. 3. *Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.* And again, Acts iii. 19. *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.* And in Heb. xii. 14. we are told, that *without holiness no man shall see the Lord:* that is, holiness of *nature*, which is productive of holiness in the *life*. Once more, Rev. xxi. 5. He *that sat upon the throne*, is represented as saying, *Behold I make all things new:* Upon this it is, that those who have *overcome*, are made *to inherit all things;* even as thus *renewed:* But without this, it is absolutely determined in the *last verse* of that chapter, *there shall in no wise enter into it* (the heavenly Jerusalem) *any thing that defileth.*

Now can it be expected that, after all this, God should not keep to his word? If such declarations as these be looked upon as false, the promise of happiness joined with them must be false too.

They are wretched mistakes, which, on both hands, men run into; when they think, that an infinitely holy unchangeable God will deal, either more *mercifully*, or more *severely* with them, than he has spoken in his word. Yet so it is; that, whilst some of timorous and melancholy dispositions, can hardly be persuaded to believe, God will be so *gracious* and *merciful* as the scriptures represent him; there are others of more sanguine tempers, that are ready to conclude, God will not condemn them to endless misery, although they live in those sins, against which, *everlasting destruction* from the presence of the Lord is most expressly denounced. Thus men are ready to judge of the great God, by *themselves;* and because they do not so carefully observe their *freindly promises*, nor so fully execute their *hasty threatenings*, as to make them good without

varying from them, therefore they conclude, it is thus with God.

Whereas the very foundation, and principle of all religion, is the TRUTH OF GOD. For if it could be supposed that God dealt *deceitfully* with his creatures, or that he would *vary* from the settled rules of his government and procedure, so as to become either *better* or *worse* than his word; he would no longer be a proper object of that honour, and trust, and obedience, which he requires of us. Wheresoever therefore any thing is expressly insisted on as a *term of salvation*, there can be no dispensing with it, no admission into heaven *without it*; nor will any thing, of our contriving, be accepted in the *room* of it.

It is not what way *I would prescribe*, if I was to chuse the method of obtaining eternal life; but the way settled and appointed by God, that every man ought to study, and with which he must entirely comply. Let men lay what schemes of salvation they please; let them insist upon the common forms of worship, or a heat and zeal for a particular party, as the way to heaven: Or let them contrive, in some *singular* and reserved way of *their own*, to give up themselves to God; yet if no real thorough change be made in their souls, they are still to seek for the true way of salvation. It is the express declaration of our Lord, and all the powers on earth shall never be able to alter his measures and proceedings, *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* If it was becoming the divine goodness and perfection, to make such a declaration; infinite truth, and justice, require it should be *made good.* God will not act inconsistently with his word to save any. But consider farther;

2. *It is wholly disagreeable to the purity and holiness of God* (as well as his faithfulness and unchangeableness) *to admit such into his presence and favour, as are unsanctified and unrenewed.*

The scripture has described the *abhorrence* which there is

to sin in the *divine nature*, by things that are to us most loathsome and detestable. A creature *lying in its blood*, and in a state of putrefaction, is not more shocking and offensive to *us*; than one that *lies in sin*, is to God. Yea *death* itself, which to our nature is the most terrible of all things, cannot be more *our* aversion, than *sin* is the aversion of a holy God. Those who live wickedly are therefore said to be *dead in trespasses and sins*. By these representations, we may form some notion of sin's contradiction to the divine nature: and thence we must conclude, the necessity of its being taken away, before we can be admitted into the favourable presence of God.

Ezek. xvi. 6.

Ephes. ii. 1.

Farther; we read of God's *hating the workers of iniquity*, and of his being *angry with the wicked every day:* Which are expressions that undoubtedly intimate, his being as effectually turned away from, or set against, impenitent unrenewed sinners, as we are against those things that are the objects of our hatred, or deserve our anger. For, though we are by no means to think, there are such passions as these in Almighty God; yet we may conceive of his dealing with the wicked, by a wise and prudent magistrate's dealing with those, that have done all that ever they could to injure his authority, and to bring the laws into contempt.

But, that I may give you the clearer notion of God's abhorring and rejecting the *workers of iniquity*, you may take the account of their case, in short, thus.....'Man being, at 'first, made up of two different natures, *flesh*, and *spirit*; the 'laws of his creation most certainly obliged him, to have been '*governed* by the dictates of that nature, which was the *noblest*, 'and most *excellent:* This his *Maker* required: This, *in* '*reason*, one would have expected. However, such was man's 'sin and folly, that it proved quite otherwise. He was soon 'drawn away to gratify his *senses*, whilst he disgraced his *bet*-'*ter powers*. Hereupon, his Maker being justly displeased, 'appointed the *separation* of that soul and body, by *death*,

'which acted so *ill* when *united*. Nevertheless, after he had '*appointed it unto men once to die*, he contrived a farther way 'for recovering the *soul* out of this unhappy *subjection* to sen-'sible and corruptible things: and promised upon such a res-'toration of the *soul*, to restore that *happiness* man had *lost*, 'by raising him to a heavenly *paradise*.' Now, if notwithstanding such grace as this, men will still prefer the *animal* life above the *spiritual;* what can they expect, but that their throwing such an aggravated contempt upon the *Father* of *Spirits*, and the *spiritual happiness* he proposes, should end in their banishment from *both?* Yea, how can it be otherwise, whilst they are pursuing those things which carry them still farther and farther from the divine Being, but that at last they should be removed to an eternal distance from that God, to whom they have made themselves *utterly disagreeable?* And it will follow from hence, that,

3. *The unrenewed mind is as much set against the happiness of heaven*, as *the great God is set against the admission of such a one into it*. So that if we could conceive an unregenerate person to be actually gotten into the presence of God above, it would be no happiness to him to be there.

Can two walk together, says the Prophet, *except they be agreed?* Would it be any pleasure for two persons to *live* continually *together*, whose inclinations, wills, and dispositions, are *opposite* and *cross to each other?* Would there not be an earnest desire of more suitable company and society? what pleasure then can a man, that is set upon things *sensible* and *sinful*, have in the presence of that Being, whose nature, and will, and blessedness, are intirely *spiritual* and *holy?*

Either God, or the *sinner* must be *changed*, before there can be any *agreement* between them: And till there is a conformity, and an agreeableness, there can be no happiness. Without this, to spend an eternity together, would be a most undesirable thing. Now, can the sinner be so foolish and blasphemous as to imagine, that God should cease to be infinitely perfect and holy? or that he should become *such a one as him-*

self? Common sense, one would think, could not fail of directing him rather to conclude, that the change must be in his *own soul;* and that *his* will must be brought to the will of the Lord, and *his* nature conformed to the *divine* nature, in order to his dwelling in the blissful presence of God.

An unrenewed mind is no way suitable either to the *company*, the *employments*, or the *entertainments*, of heaven.

The *company* of those that inhabit the world above, must needs be disagreeable to an unholy soul. For, since God himself is so (as we have just been arguing) all those that are conformed to him, and whose felicity consists in the enjoyment of him, must consequently be disagreeable too. Jesus Christ is the *express image* of the Father, in holiness, as well as other perfections; and as it was his character on earth, it is his glory in heaven, to be *separate* from sinners. Holy *angels*, even in their appearance to *good men* here below, have filled them with confusion and dread; and how then shall the whole host of heaven, in all their splendour and purity, be endured by sinful men? The *spirits of just men*, that are perfected above, are such as the sinner hated, scorned, persecuted, or lived in a constant dislike to, in this world; and can they then be happy together in another world; when the difference between them is greatened, by the *consummate* holiness of the one, and the *increased* prejudices of the other? Their *dying* in a state of enmity, has made that enmity an *unalterable* thing. Lay all this together, and if an unholy person would not find one companion like himself in heaven, think, what pleasure he could have in the society of the blessed, supposing it were possible for him to get among them.

Again, the *employments* of heaven would not suit the temper and inclinations of such a one, any more than the company. *Contemplation* of the things of God and religion, is what he has never inured himself to; his temper has been too much set against *serious consideration*, ever to take pleasure in such an exercise. And the services of *angels*, who are always *fulfil-*

ling the pleasure of their Lord, would go quite against the grain of the sinner's inclinations; who had been used to seek *his own pleasure*, and to consult *his own will*, in all his actions. Instead of praying, that *the will of God* might be *done on earth as it is in heaven*, he would wish the quite contrary; that there might be *no other* doing of the will of God in *heaven*, than what he had been *used to here on earth;* that is, not to regard it at all, yea, farther, the very *praises* and *triumphs* of heaven would be unsuitable to an unrenewed mind. Such a one could by no means bear a part in that solemn acclamation, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty;* since he had no admiring thoughts of God's holiness. Nor could he ever join in that *song of the Lamb*,.....Glory to him that hath *loved us* and *washed us from our sins in his own blood*, so long as he remained unsanctified and unrenewed. Such *employments* as these, could afford no pleasure to a wicked man.

Hence it necessarily follows, that the *entertainments* and *joys* of heaven, would by no means answer the wishes and desires of an unregenerate soul, though placed in the midst of them. The substantial happiness of the heavenly inhabitants consists in the *knowledge* and *love* of God: But I need not say more to prove that an unrenewed soul is incapable of this; I shall only add, that by this *incapacity*, such a one must needs suffer the eternal loss of all these joys, which arise from a *beholding* the unveil'd glories of the Deity; and also of all those, which are wrapt up in that high satisfaction that results from the *loving*, and *knowing* we are *beloved* by, the greatest and best Being in the universe. At the same time, the unholy soul is a perfect stranger to all those transports, that are owing to a review of the *methods* of *converting grace;* and can taste nothing of the bliss, that springs from a *sacred indissoluble friendship* with *holy intelligent spirits*. And, upon the reasons already alledged, the same might be said of every other joy of heaven.

But now, let me engage you seriously to attend to the conclusion of the whole matter. And there is one truth, which I apprehend will appear with great evidence, after what has

been said; namely, *That a great deal more is necessary, than is commonly imagined, to reconcile you to the heaven and happiness of christians.* There is not only a difficulty, in bringing men to the gospel terms of obtaining happiness; but even in reconciling them to the happiness itself. The christian's heaven is not a Mahomet's *paradise*, a place of sensual delights and enjoyments; but it is a *spiritual* felicity, and such only as can be enjoyed by pure intellectual Beings.

That man, therefore, talks of he knows not what, who can talk of going to heaven whilst his business, or pleasures, or possessions here, engross his thoughts and affections. Thou must have relishes of a very different nature from those of the sensualist and the worldling, before thou canst be happy with God, and the glorified *spirits* above.

If then, thou hast ever made it thy wish *to die the death of the righteous;* remember that now thou art told, thou must in thy life-time *become righteous*, by being thus *renewed* and *born again*, or that wish will avail thee nothing. But whether thou art convinced of this or not, I must, for the present, cease arguing with thee, and close this chapter: which I shall do, with these two *inferences* from what has been said.

1. We may infer, *There are but few that shall be saved.*

If such *spirituality* be necessary to prepare men for *heaven;* we may conclude, without any thing of an uncharitable censorious temper, that very *few* are *going thither.* Thus much, our Lord told his disciples in *his day;* and this, we have abundant reason to apply also to our *own day.*

Take an account of those that live in atheism and unbelief; and that will not acknowledge or serve God at all:

Then compute the number of those that worship God vainly, in an idolatrous superstitious manner, and resting in their bodily worship and devotion:

After that, look over the crew of common profane swearers, and blasphemers of the name of God:

Reckon up all those that live in the stated profanation of the Lord's day:

Add to these, a list of such as are guilty of a resolute disobedience to parents, or masters, or lawful governors:

Tell over the number of those that are notorious for drunkenness, intemperance, or for revenge and destructive passions, whereby they shorten their own lives, or take away the lives of others:

Set down all those, that are infamous for adultery, or fornication, or other habitual uncleanness:

Go on to those who thrive by unjust means, such as robbery, frauds, and oppression:

Survey the crowd of those that are given up to a spirit of lying and falshood; and that even in their solemn oaths, and bearing witness in courts of judicature:

And once more find out the restless tribe of those that are vagrants from the stations, in which God had placed them in the world: or that are coveting a deal of it, and never satisfied with the allotments of providence:

And when you have joined all these together, the number of such as are renewed and sanctified, will be found comparatively very small. And that you may not be afraid to set down any, as unregenerate, who live in one or more of the aforementioned sins, take the text in that, 1 epistle of John, iii. 9. along with you in your computation; *Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin;* that is, so as to love it, and live in it. And then, where ever you see a person that does habitually commit sin, and continue in it, you may without scruple place him amongst those that are *not born* of GOD.

But then, besides such as live in notorious wickedness, you you are to take in all such as rest in an *outward appearance* of religion, whilst they are strangers to the *spiritual divine life*, and the *noblest* exercises of it: Such as take up a profession, *merely* from their *education*, or from *external motives* and inducements; and owe all their restraints from sin, to these: And such as have once made a stricter profession, but *degenerate* and fall from it: And, after all these are added to the forementioned numbers of transgressors, how few shall we meet with that are savingly renewed?

In your computations of this kind, you are directed by that of our Saviour, in the seventh of Matthew, the latter end: *Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord! but he that doth the will of my Father*, &c.

The design of all this, is not to discourage men's attempts, but to put them upon contending with the greater earnestness; and shewing a more ardent desire of being found among the *few that shall be saved.* We must not only *seek* but *strive to enter in at the strait gate;* and that for this very reason, *because many* shall seek *to enter in* (by an outward profession, or some faint endeavours) *that shall not be able*, Luke xiii. 21.

2. From what has been said, we should learn to *pity those, that are heated with a mistaken zeal in the lesser points of religion, whilst this greatest and weightiest doctrine of christianity is neglected.*

Never was there more reason for the exercise of such a compassion, than in the present age; when party-zeal is raised to such a height, and *true piety* sunk so low. Are there not many, who would now be thought the only *prophets* of the Lord, that lay more stress upon outward forms and ceremonies, than upon faith and repentance? and make more to depend upon their *own way* of administering *baptism*, and the *Lord's supper*, than upon those *qualifications* without which NO administration of these sacraments can be available? Nay, are there not those

who have laid the whole stress of our acceptance with God, upon a point of *civil government?* As if it was of more importance to embrace a set of notions of that kind, than to observe such a doctrine as this I am upon, which our Saviour thought fit to prefer to all others.

What *political* and *state orations* have of late been the weekly entertainment of our most *solemn* assemblies? yea, what trifling and *childish harangues* have some of the *greatest audiences* in this *city*, and *nation*, been amused with? *Conversion* and *Santification* have been slighted; and contempt thrown upon *those*, who are most in earnest in recommending these things. By some, they have not been *believed*, nor by others *understood*, and by very few *insisted on*, as they ought to be. And shall we not pity those, who are going on confidently in an opinion of themselves, upon some *outward advantages;* when at the same time they are strangers to the *true* and *only* way to heaven? Alas, man! thy crying up the *church*, and being of this or the other *party* in it, will not stand thee in stead at the bar of God, if thou knowest not what it is to be *born again.*

Thou mayest despise this way of preaching, and writing, if thou pleasest; only know this, that in so doing thou dost not despise *man*, but God. All the *texts* I have quoted, must be blotted out of the *Bible*, before thou can justify such a contempt. Thou must find out some *other heaven*, instead of that I have been describing; and take up some *other name*, instead of that of a *christian;* before thou canst set aside the doctrine of *regeneration.*

So that every wise and good man may well lay it to heart, that a work of this nature is so much at a stand. And whatever others do, let you and I make it our constant request to God, that he would *revive his work in the midst of the years.*

CHAP. III.

The MEANS *of attaining the new Birth.*

HAVING shewn wherein the being *born again* does *consist;* as also the *necessity* of it, if we would *see the kingdom of God;* (that is, if we would be either *real christians* in this world, or *glorified spirits* in another); I would now suppose the language of some convinced sinner, to be such as this: "O tell "me, what course I shall take to get out of my sinful state, and "to get an interest in the renewing sanctifying grace of God! "*What shall I do to be saved?* And in order to that, what "shall I do that I may be *born again?*"

If this be the unfeigned disposition of your mind, it is one great step toward a saving change. It includes in it a sense of your being in a *lost and miserable* condition, whilst in a state of sin: And at the same time, a most hearty acknowledgment that the *gain of the whole world*, and the fullest enjoyment of sensible things which are vain and perishing, can never make amends for the *loss* of *your souls*. It includes farther, somewhat of a *desire* towards God and *heaven*, and *spiritual* things; that you cannot be easy under the thought of being *for ever* rejected, and cast off by Almighty God: Nay, that you are convinced, there is more real satisfaction in the ways of religion, *at present*, than in those of sin. But yet, how to have your hearts so changed, and renewed, as to get out of the *state* you are in; and to get rid of your *sinful* inclinations to *sensible objects;* and to serve God, and walk in his *ways* as you desire to do; this fills your breasts with the greatest anxiety, and employs your thoughts in restless contrivances and concern.

If any should cast their eyes upon this passage who are not gotten so far as I here suppose the reader to be; let them seriously consider what has been said in the *foregoing chapter*, and I am persuaded nothing more in a way of *reasoning* will be needful to produce such a temper of mind.

But where this is truly the case, I think the *following directions* may be sufficient to bring such a person into a safe and renewed state. Only here, I must bespeak the reader's *fullest and strongest resolution* to comply with what is suggested, under every particular that shall be laid before him. It is not the observing of *one*, but *all the directions* I am going to mention, that must be endeavoured after; I mean, so far as they appear proper and necessary to secure this great end, your being *born again*. To begin then with that which is most easy;

I. *Be very careful and constant, in attending upon the preaching of God's word.*

Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Rom. x. 17. He has appointed a *standing ministry*, for this very end; that the truths and duties of religion may be so *explained*, and *enforced*, as to render them impressive, and effectual to change and rule the *hearts of men*. And where God is pleased, by inward grace, to concur with the outward dispensation of his word, even *that preaching* which may seem very unlikely to produce such an effect as the *new birth*, shall yet become *the power of God unto salvation*, Romans i. 16.

You may perhaps, be ready now to wish, that God would send an *angel* from *heaven;* or as the *rich man* requested in the *parable*, that he would send one immediately *from the dead*, to inform your minds; and to do some great and miraculous thing for you. But when you are only to look for help from those, of the *same infirmities and passions* with yourselves, you may think that very little is like to be done toward your renovation.

Let me, therefore, argue this matter briefly with you. What could an angel, or one from the dead, say, more than is said in the *gospel?* Or what could he do more, to prove the truth of what he said, than has been done by Christ and his apostles? Or what way could he find, to the hearts and con-

sciences of men, that should give him a greater power and influence over them, than such appearances of God and angels have formerly had? If an angel was to appear but *once*, it would by no means equal the force of the *daily* pleadings and instructions of God's *ministers:* And if an angel was to live amongst us, he would, in time, we have reason to believe, meet with no better treatment than the Lord of *angels* did. There is a great deal of difference between *startling* or terrifying the mind, and working a thorough *change* in it: Apparitions from the other world might *alarm* us, for a *while;* but the operation of Almighty grace, by and with the gospel, is only able to *change* and new mould the *heart*. And God *has given us this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power might* appear to be *of him, and not of us*, 2 Cor. iv. 7.

Attend therefore upon the preaching of the gospel, as believing it to be the ordinance of God. And let not the *means* be thought insufficient to gain their *end*, when under the *direction*, and accompanied with the *blessing* of *him* that can do all things. You are not, indeed, to look for any thing from *us*, as though by our own power and skill we could bring you to God; but, your expectation being once fixed on God, you cannot look for too much from *him*.

Yet here it must be added, that next to your having a hope thus fixed on God; it is your wisdom, and your duty, to chuse that *ministry* statedly to attend upon, which you find most *instructive* and intelligible, most *serious* and affecting; and to be thankful to God, if you meet with men whose *gifts*, and *manner* of dispensing the gospel, become suitable to you.

And, when at any time you find yourself under *convictions*, there ought to be the utmost concern that the *grace of God* be not *received in vain;* or in other words, that such convictions be not *lost*. For by stifling or turning away from them, the most *agreeable* and *useful* ministry will cease to be of any *real* benefit and service to you: And by excusing, from time, your *regard* to the impressions which are made on your minds, the

most *important* things will lose their *force;* and the most *earnest* solicitations, will become but as an *uncertain unheeded* sound.

Moreover, you should be very careful not to absent yourselves *wilfully*, or for *slight* and trivial reasons from the place of *public worship*. What knowest thou, but that very sermon, which thou turnedst away from, might have done more for thee than all that ever thou heardst in thy life? What knowest thou but that very time, God might have given some secret and particular instructions to the Preacher, to deliver those things that should have reached and changed thy heart; when through a sluggish, or worldly, or vain and trifling temper, thou wast kept from the assembly of God's people?

There is one caution, however, that 'tis proper to subjoin here; namely, not to look for a change so sudden and miraculous, as to have the *whole* work done upon your souls by *one sermon*. Sometimes indeed it has been so, that a man has *come* into a place of worship an *enemy* to all that is good, and has gone away thoroughly resolved to become a *new man*. Almighty grace has made the change in an *instant*. But this is not to be usually expected. And, I think, it is much more desirable, that our light should increase *gradually;* and so the change be carried on, by *slower* steps and degrees; than that it should be brought about with such *violence*, as in some extraordinary cases it has been. One point may more easily be gained upon us by one sermon; and another by another sermon; and a regular attention to a *course* of these, may do that for us, which *one* discourse could not so well have done. Therefore if you should not find yourselves wrought upon, in that extraordinary manner, which has been the case of some; yet, if there be a gradual light and change, by a regular continued attention to the dispensation of God's word, you may safely conclude yourselves to be *born again* thereby. The renovation of *some*, is like opening the shutters of a window, at noon-day; and letting in a *full light* into the room at *once*. The renewing of *others*, is like the breaking in of the morning's light, into a room which

has all its windows open to receive it: it appears very dim at first, but increases gradually, 'till at last the room is brightened and irradiated with the noon-day's sun.

So that, upon the whole, you see what reason there is for this advice, and what regard ought to be had to it; to be constant and diligent in attending upon the *preaching* of God's *word*, in order to your being *renewed and born again*.

II. *There must be some time allowed and set apart for retirement, and serious thoughtfulness.*

If the heart be affected, and put upon any good purposes and resolutions, *in* the time of *public worship;* you must endeavour when that is *over*, to cherish such impressions; and to put in execution your good intentions. Let it be your care, as fast as you can, to get into some *secret place;* where you may be out of the reach of every thing that would divert or distract you: and then putting yourselves into the best posture for serious thoughtfulness that you are able, let those things that have engaged your *attention* in *public*, be called to mind, and more distinctly applied to your *own state* and condition, in *private*.

Whilst there is a shunning of retirement, and consideration, the strongest convictions will not be able to make any *real* and *lasting* change, either in your tempers or in your lives. Serious thoughtfulness is necessary, to give every conviction its proper force: by this, we shall be led to contrive matters so, as that they may afterward suit our conversation and behaviour to the impressions that are made upon us. Thus much we are plainly taught, from that known passage of the Psalmist; *I thought on my ways and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. He thought*, and then he *turned*. Yea, his thinking closely and seriously engaged him *immediately* to set about his duty: *I made haste, and delayed not, to keep thy commandments*.

Psal. cxix. 59.

Verse 60.

Sometimes *afflictive providences* may be very serviceable to promote a thoughtful, and retired disposition of mind: And this kind of thoughtfulness may be still as effectual, if followed and improved to produce a thorough change, as *that* which proceeds from a being affected in *hearing* the *word* of God. It is by afflictions and distresses only, that some men are brought to *themselves:* And till a gay romantic fancy is corrected, and the mind is brought to a just way of thinking, both on its own state, and the nature of all sensible enjoyments; there will be no inclination to return to God, or to live the life of a *real christian.* Hence it is that the Prodigal in the parable is represented, as first *coming to himself,* and then *returning to his father.* After a distracted and thoughtless life, his *husks* brought him to think of his *folly,* and of his *miserable* abandoned state, together with the plenty and the comforts of his *father's house:* And by a due consideration of these, he was soon put into a method, that proved successful to bring about his recovery.

But, whatever be the means of calling in our thoughts from their sinful vagaries, and from the pursuit of lying vanities; if they are not fixed closely upon the leading and most important *truths of religion,* they will never work a saving change in us. There is a great deal of difference betwixt a person's becoming *thoughtful* or *pensive* about his life, and his affairs in this world, and a *religious consideration* of his state and condition in the world to which at death he must be removed. Therefore, the scripture sums up *all other* considerations in this *one;* meditating on the *end of life. O that they were wise! that they understood this! that they would consider their latter end.* That is, consider so, as to be affected with the *certainty* of death; not only as it is appointed unto men in general, but to *myself* in particular, once to die. And then also to consider the *uncertainty* of the *time,* when death shall overtake us; not knowing but we may be in eternity every moment. We must think, farther, of the *awful consequences* of death: That we must *all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, to receive according to what we have done in the body, whether good or bad.* 2 Cor. v. 10.

They that are duly affected with such thoughts as *these* will soon be carried to a multitude of *others*, which have a plain and very close *connection* with them. Thus to consider our *latter end*, will lead us to think of the *preparation* that is necessary to our safety and comfort, at such a time. This will put you upon considering your *own ways*, and how much you have done to *destroy* yourselves. It will also lead you to think on God's *ways* towards you, and how much he has done to save you. This will direct your thoughts to a Redeemer, and will open to you the treasures of mercy in our Lord Jesus Christ; *who, though he was rich, yet for your sakes became poor*, and became a sacrifice too, that he might bring you to God. In short, to think seriously of such a change as *death*, will make men solicitous, first to have such a change as the *new birth* pass upon them; since without this they die, not only for a *time*, but for *ever*. And when once such a concern as this is thoroughly excited, there is a great deal done toward your being *born again*.

III. *You must frequently and diligently read the holy scriptures, and other divine writings, that may instruct you in the nature of conversion and true piety.*

In the first and chief place, your Bibles should be searched and studied very seriously and diligently. Here it is, that we have the discoveries of eternal *life*, and *death;* with the means of escaping the *wrath*, and obtaining the *joys* to come. Here, all the treasures of saving wisdom and knowledge lie: and from hence it is, that all *other writers* of sacred things derive their best thoughts, and rules of conduct, in every treatise of a religious nature.

Those that read the scriptures in order to their *conversion*, should especially take care to begin with what is plain and obvious; and what more immediately relates to their *own* case, in their renovation and turning to God. Such as the account of the *returning prodigal*, in the fifteenth of St Luke. St Paul's narrative of his own conversion, in the twenty sixth chapter of

the *Acts of the Apostles.* That *sermon* that proved the means of converting three thousand, in the second chapter of the same book. Such descriptions of a saving change, as that in the fifth of Ephesians, from the seventeenth to the end; going on in the sixth chapter also to the seventeenth verse. And then, as an excitement to shew the greater regard to these, it will be proper to read such chapters as the eleventh to the Hebrews; which is a noble list of great and good men, that have despised and conquered the world, and the sensitive nature, by their believing regards to invisible and eternal things: and so to turn to the examples of *present judgments* on the wicked and finally impenitent: as also to the most affecting representations of the *future* punishments and rewards of men, in *heaven* or *hell:* These, I say, and such like places of scripture, ought first to be carefully read and understood, by those that are seeking after the *new birth.* The Psalms, and the devotional parts of scripture, should be read till there is an intimate acquaintance with them.

But now, as there are *treatises* that collect and *lay together* the several passages of *scripture* which relate to one and the same thing; so it is adviseable, that some of these writings should be consulted, as well as the sacred oracles. And I doubt not, but such treatises as have been published upon *Conversion*, *Repentance*, *Regeneration*, and holy *Resolution;* in a plain method, and in a modern style, and with a serious spirit; have frequently been blessed to the producing of that change I am here directing to, as well as the Bible itself.

In all your reading, you should make it your care, to form very *distinct* and *clear notions* of what you read: putting such a question often to yourselves, as that of Philip to the Ethiopian; *Understandest thou what thou readest?* And when you are considering what it is to be *born again*, you should endeavour to inform yourself of the nature and consequences of man's first *apostacy* from his Maker; that you may conceive the more truly and affectingly, of his being *renewed* and *recovered* out of such a condition, by

Acts viii. 30.

the *gospel.* If we are not acquainted with our *natural* state, as it is a state both of *sin* and *misery*, we shall never *strive* (as we ought) to get *out* of it.

Nor are we qualified, till this is done, to obtain mercy at the hands of a Redeemer. We are told, that Christ *came to seek and to save that which was lost.* Not *all* that were so; for then none must be condemned or cast off: but such as have a deep and *thorough sense* that they are lost, without a Saviour; and accordingly are brought to *his terms* of being saved.*

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* It is true that Christ did not come to save ALL who were lost, for then *all* must and would be saved; but it is also true that his commission was not limited to such as had or might have a deep and thorough sense of their lost condition, for then *none* could be saved, as none have this of themselves. Had a deep sense of sin been a pre-requisite of salvation, neither Paul on his way to Damascus, nor thousands running the same mad career, had ever been favoured with such gracious discoveries of the Saviour, and intimations of pardon.

Restricting the gospel call to sinners of a certain description, is dishonouring to the grace of God, and discouraging to the sinner. They who have the deepest sense of their undone condition are the most backward to apply the promises and invitations of the gospel.

If sinners have a deep sense of their sin and guilt, they are indebted to Christ for it.....It is the effect of that light which shines in his word, the fruit of his Spirit, as a Spirit of conviction or illumination, and in the regenerate is a part of that poverty of spirit to which the blessing attaches.

The gospel call is to all without exception or discrimination. To be a sinner of Adam's race is qualification enough for receiving that mercy which is sovereign and free:....*for it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ came to save the chief of sinners.* Every other qualification which they ever can or shall possess flows from his mercy. EDITOR.

It is therefore, farther requisite; that you should have very distinct conceptions, of what is done on *his* part, and what is to be done on *yours*. Christ has done, and will do, all the work of a Saviour; but he has not done, and he will not, yea, he cannot do the work of a *sinner*. He died for us, 'tis true; but he never undertook to *repent*, and *believe*, or become a *new creature*, for any man: nor did he purchase eternal life and salvation for any *without these:* nor has he purchased the *Spirit*,†

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† Jesus neither did repent nor believe for sinners, nor did he purchase eternal life for such as never would repent and believe; but most assuredly he purchased salvation for the *unbelieving* and *impenitent*....not that they might continue in that situation, but that they might be born again.....Instead of salvation being purchased without regeneration, faith and repentance, they constitute a distinguishing part of it. They belong to the application, are the effect of the Spirit's agency, and are to future glory what the blade and ear is to the full corn. As they neither can be exercised nor enjoyed by one person for another, all the redeemed, and even elect vessels dying in infancy, or without having ever been favoured with the exercise of reason, must indispensibly have the ROOT of these and every grace in their hearts. And though Christ could not exercise these graces in the room of his people, he made ample provision for them, by fulfilling the condition of the covenant of grace, and securing the accomplishment of the promise. Fulfilling the condition is the ground on which the promises are accomplished.

Though used by some Divines, the phraseology of purchasing the Spirit is rather inaccurate. Our author often asserts, and always takes for granted, that the Holy Ghost is God, equal with the Father and the Son. To say that the Son purchased the Father or himself would sound harshly, but would be as good sense, and equally orthodox, as to say he purchased the Spirit: "for there are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are ONE God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory." Christ opened a channel that the third person in the Trinity, the glorious concurring party in the council of peace, might with

to work in us any way *unsuitably* to our *reasonable* natures and capacities.

I might instance in some other things, had I not said so much to explain the doctrine of the *new birth* already: but I shall refer the reader to the first chapter of this treatise, if he yet stands in need of information in this matter; and I beg that he would read it with a due care and attention.

For this I must repeat, that till you do in some measure understand these things, you ought to give very diligent attendance to *reading* the *scriptures*, and *other books* that may help you to think aright, both of your *condition* and your *duty*.

IV. *You should hereupon endeavour to affect your souls with a sense of the corruption of your nature, and the many sins that you have actually committed in your lives.*

We find in ourselves very strong inclinations to many things, which, even *natural conscience* tells us ought *not to be done;* and very great reluctancy and aversion to other things that *ought to be done* by us. We may observe a deal of confusion and inconsistency in our *thoughts;* a perverseness and meanness in our *wills*, and *tempers;* and a prevailing sensuality in our *passions* and *affections*, as also frequent *jarrings* and *contentions* amongst these: from all which, you cannot but conclude your *nature* is very much disordered: and therefore should deeply lament with the Psalmist, that you were *shapen in iniquity*, and *conceived in sin*. O look to Paradise, and to a state of innocence! consider how wretchedly human nature is changed, and degenerate from what it once was. Surely that will put some such lamentation, Psalm li. 5.

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infinite propriety apply the purchased redemption. A price may be, and actually has been, paid by the Son of God for a portion of divine influences and graces; but a divine person cannot be purchased.....It was through the Eternal Spirit that Christ offered the all-atoning sacrifice, and by the same Spirit he was qualified for every part of his arduous work. EDITOR.

as that of the prophet, into your mouths; *The crown is fallen from our head, woe unto us that we have sinned.*

But then we must not satisfy ourselves in bewailing our natural depravity only; for, that is to charge all our crimes upon our ancestors: We must, farther, take an account of our many *actual transgressions;* and so *remember our own evil ways, and our doings that have not been good, as to loathe ourselves in our own sight, for our iniquities and for our abominations.* Ezek. xxxv. 31.

Here I would advise you to sit down and think over the sins of *childhood* and *youth*, which you are able to call to mind. And take as distinct an account, as you can, of your miscarriages when *at home* with your parents; and afterwards, when you were *sent out* for business or education, into the world.

Think of the *several places* you have lived in, and what your sins have been in each of these.

If you are so far advanced in the world, as to have families of your own, think of your faults in a *relative capacity:* what sins you have been guilty of against *wife*, or *husband*, against *children*, or *servants*, or *equals.*

And so also think of your sins against those you may have dealt with in a way of *trade;* or conversed with in a way of *friendship;* or those that should you have helped in a way of *charity.*

Take an account of the sins of your *tempers* and *constitutions.*

Then mark down those, that arise from your *outward circumstances*, and condition.

Especially take care to find out that, which is most strictly speaking your *own iniquity*, the sin to which you have been most addicted; and where, in any instance, this has broken

out in such a manner, as to leave uneasy impressions upon your mind, and yet to be repeated, Be sure take an account of all such acts of wickedness.

Let the *ten commandments* be set before you, when you are making this inquisition: and set down the several sins which you apprehend you have been guilty of, in *doing* what is *forbidden*, or *neglecting* what is *required* under each command.

After this, think of the times when you *stifled convictions*; and turned away from the offers of grace, and calls to repentance in the *gospel*. That you have not only *sinned* but have been *impenitent* too.

Think of your *sins* against a Redeemer: That you have been willing to live, so long, in *ignorance* of his undertaking: Or that you have thought *too slightly and meanly* of his suffering, and sacrifice: Or that you have *turned his grace into wantonness*, and because grace has abounded, therefore you have abounded, the more in sin.

Think of the *despite* you have done to the Holy Spirit: *Resisting* his *motions*, when you have been in public ordinances; and *putting by*, or excusing yourselves from a compliance with his more secret suggestions.

And then at the end of all, reckon up the several *aggravations* of your sins: That is, set down as far as you can remember,

The mercies and deliverances
The judgments and afflictions
The counsels and good advice
The reproofs and censure
The light and knowledge
The vows and promises

} you have sinned against.

With *whatever else* you can think of, that will make your sins appear the *more grievous* to you.

In the whole of this *search* after sin, you must resolve that no *one* transgression shall be overlooked, through a *wilful concealment*, or a *negligent search*, or a *vain excuse*. But lay thyself as open as possible before God; and take pains even to find out thy forgotten and lesser iniqüities; and be sure not to admit a thought of any thing at such a time, that would cover thy guilt.

Now spread the black catalogue before thine eyes, and see what thou canst do to excite all manner of resentments against thy sins, and against thyself because of them.

Think of every thing that may excite thy *shame*. The *folly* of thy actions; the *baseness* and *meanness* of them; the *reproach* which they deserve from the *world;* but especially their *final* exposing of thee before angels and men, at the last day. Possibly this may *turn thy heart* against, and provoke thine *abhorrence* of those actions that thus appear *shameful* to thee.

Again; try farther what thou canst do to alarm thy *fears*. See if the apprehension of some *dreadful calamity* overtaking thee, whilst thou art going on in a sinful course, will not make thee cry out in such language as that of the Psalmist, *My flesh trembles for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments*. O! see if the *terrors of God's law* and *justice*, and especially those of the last *judgment*, be not sufficient to persuade thee to repentance.

Farther; let every thing that may work upon thy *sorrow* and *grief* be attended to. The *ingratitude* thou hast been guilty of, to the greatest and best of benefactors; thy *forfeiture* of the most valuable privileges and blessings; the many *mischiefs* thou hast, *now*, brought upon thyself; and the unspeakable *torments* that sin *hereafter* exposes thee to, which it is impossible for thee to escape, if thou goest on in it. And then say, if these things be not enough to pierce and grieve the most dull and unimpressive heart that has once learnt to *realize* what it thinks of.

Once more; let every thing that can stir up thy *hatred* and *aversion*, be called to mind. And think, if thou canst, of *any thing* in the world that deserves to be hated more than *sin*. The most *loathsome creatures* have nothing in them so odious as *sin;* nor the most *ungrateful* and *abominable actions* of men toward one another, any thing so frightful, as the sinning against God.

If by this means thy heart is set against thy evil ways, then the motions of grace, and of a renewing Spirit, will be welcome; and then mayest thou reasonably, and comfortably, expect them. And so, that *shame*, and *fear*, and *sorrow*, and *hatred*, which at first might be no more than the exercise of so many *natural passions*, shall be sublimed by the operation of the holy Spirit, into that saving grace of a christian, *Repentance unto life never to be repented of.*

V. Another of the prescribed means of regeneration, *is humble and fervent prayer.*

I know it is said, that *the sacrifice of the* Prov. xv. 8. *wicked is an abominaton to the Lord.* And I have heard it therefore argued by some, that such as are in an unregenerate state are not to be put upon prayer, or any religious exercise; because, whilst in such a state, nothing that is done by them can be acceptable or pleasing to God. But this kind of talk is plainly owing to a *criminal neglect* of some parts of scripture, which occasions the *wronging* and *misinterpreting* of *others*. If he that is wicked, intends to *continue* in his wickedness, without doubt *his prayer* must be an *abomination;* as it is a most insolent attempt to impose upon an Omniscient Almighty God. But if the wicked man, under a serious sense of the evil of his ways, and with such kind of reflections on himself and his condition as those I have just mentioned, seeks to God for grace to renew and change his heart and life, such prayer is far from being offensive to the great *Father of mercies.*

St, Peter does expressly require Simon Magus, as ill a man as he was, and even whilst he was utterly estranged to the *grace*

and *spirit* of the *gospel, to pray to God;* and that upon a mere probability, that the *thoughts of his heart might be forgiven him.* From hence I think there is abundant reason to conclude, that if a man's *own conscience* should condemn him; yea, if an apostle or messenger sent immediately from God, should tell him he is in the *bondage of sin and iniquity;* yet it is his duty to *pray* for pardoning and renewing grace.

And surely you have encouragement enough to plead with God, when you find it expressly said, that *he gives the holy Spirit to them that ask him:* by which, our Saviour tells us a little after our text, we are *born again.* And elsewhere, the language of God to a sinful people was, *Ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you: And ye shall seek me and find me, when you shall search for me with all your heart,* Jer. xxix. 12. 13. Luke xi. 13.

You say, that you are not able to do any thing *of yourself,* that it is the grace of God *alone* that must *renew and save you.* Can you not express yourself thus in *prayer* to God, as well as talk in such a manner to your *fellow-creatures;* Go then, and tell a *gracious* God how *helpless* you are; and how *insufficient* to *every good work.* If you can do no more, yet so far surely you may go, to make such complaints in *secret,* as well as in company; and to speak to him *who sees in secret,* as you would do to your companions. Tell God therefore, instead of telling *them,* that you are convinced nothing but his *almighty grace* can renew and sanctify you: and that you therefore come to beg this grace of him. And withal be sure to urge his *own promises,* in and through our Lord Jesus Christ. I am persuaded, you will have no reason to complain of the *unsuccessfulness* of such a course as this.

There is a very moving representation of such a frame and temper of mind, as that I would endeavour to work in you by thus sending you to your knees, in a *discourse of Mr. N. Taylor, concerning faith in Christ.* This with some little alterations and additions, I shall here recommend to you; as what

may direct your thoughts, and assist your expressions, when first, under discouraging apprehensions of yourselves, you look to a Redeemer to help and save you.

"My *sins* are many, and my *danger* is great, and my "*fears* are proportionable to *both;* what will become of me to "all *eternity*, God only knows. There is indeed salvation for "*lost sinners*, through the *blood* of a *crucified Jesus;* but I am "terribly afraid I shall never get an interest in it. Many *dis-* "*couragements* break in, like wave after wave, upon my dis- "tressed *soul;*" and I have scarce *faith* and *hope* enough to put up a *prayer* to God. And yet I cannot forbear crying, *Lord be merciful to me a sinner!*.....If such short, but ardent, breathings as these, may obtain the gracious regards of my great Lord, I shall be happy. If these will *not* avail, what shall a poor creature do, that knows not how to order his words, or how to govern his thoughts, or to perform any thing that is really good!.....O how I am tossed in my own spirit?..... "I am told there is a safe and desirable *harbour* before me; "but, Lord! at how great a distance am I from it? it is not "long, since I *had any thoughts about it;* and I fear I shall "never *reach* it, I see the waves swell and prevail so much be- "fore me. Lord *save me or I perish!*.....Well, I must and "will try, what *rich*, *sovereign*, *free grace* will do for me. If "I am the *vilest* sinner that ever *was*, then Christ had never "yet so fair an opportunity of shewing his *tender love*, his *in-* "*finite power*, his *unshaken faithfulness*, and the *value* and "*efficacy* of his *blood*, in all their beauty and glory, as now he "has. What though I am an *obscure* person, and should never "have an opportunity to *publish* it on earth; yet it will not die "as a *secret in my bosom*. The happy tidings will *run through* "the heavens; and the *blessed inhabitants* above will wonder "at such exceeding grace overflowing to *me*. Eternal *hallelu-* "*jahs* will be sung to the Lamb of God on my account. I will, "therefore, cast myself into the *arms* of infinite mercy:.....But "that's too proud and forward an expression; I would rather "say, I'll throw myself at his *feet:* If he spurn me away, I can "but die *then*, and die I must if I *don't apply* to him. Who "knows, but he may stretch out the *sceptre* of his *grace*, and

"then I shall live. However, *live* or *die*, I'll betake myself to "him; if ever help comes, I know it must come *this way*. "And as I am resolved to *pray*, so I will *wait* the issue of my "my prayers; and see how it may please the most compassion- "ate *lover of souls* to deal with mine."

VI. You may now *venture to make a solemn dedication of yourselves to God, through Christ Jesus, as those that are desirous to be his in an everlasting covenant.*

When you have been *entreating the favour of God*, with your *whole hearts;* and pleading the *merits* and mediation of his *Son*, in whom he has declared himself to be *ever well pleased;* you may then proceed to a *surrender* of your souls into his hands; and may engage yourselves by *particular vows* and *promises*, to be the Lord's.

Psalm cxix. 58.

Matth iii. 17. *and* xvii. 5.

This you must take care to do, with the greatest *seriousness* and solemnity. Let it be done in a way that may most thoroughly impress and engage your *own hearts;* and you may depend upon it, that such as are thus brought to give up themselves to God, he will *in no wise cast off*.* And 'tis certainly fit you should act in this case, as men are used to do in other affairs of importance; that is, not only in *word*, but in *writing*, this covenant dedication of yourselves should be made. You should *draw up a summary* of what you engage both to *be*, and to *do*, and then *sign* it with your own *hand*, as a testimony of your acting with the utmost *consideration*, *heartiness*, and *resolution*, in this matter.

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* We should labour to get our hearts impressed, and should carefully guard against a slight and formal performance of any duty, and especially one so solemn. In endeavouring to come to God, and surrender ourselves to him, there is the greatest reason to depend that he will *in no wise cast out;* but our dependance must not in the smallest degree rest either on our self-dedication or the manner of it, but simply and solely on the divine kindness and faithfulness pledged for our encouragement in the promise and invitation. EDITOR.

I am far from being singular, in *giving* such *advice* as this: And I am not the only person that has reason to be thankful to God for an *early complying* with it. Mr. Gouge, Mr. Allen, and others of our most serious writers on the subjects of *conversion* and *regeneration*, have insisted on such a method, as the most proper way of *entering* upon a religious life. And when men are once brought to *apply* their thoughts to the things of God, and the concerns of their souls, as they *ought* to do, they will not call it a *task*, or account it an *unnecessary burden* to be obliged to this. When Isaiah is foretelling the *conversion* of those that should live in *after-times*, and of those that were *aliens* to the *covenant of promise* made with Israel, he represents it thus; that *one shall say I am the Lord's: and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob: and another shall* subscribe *with his* hand *unto the Lord.*

Isa. xliv. 5.

When, therefore, you have considered well the *term*, upon which you are to give up yourselves to God; if you find a *willingness* and *desire* to comply with them, *write* them out: and then venture, by *subscribing your hand* to them, to declare your *acceptance* of them, and your *hearty resolution* to observe them.

In this first solemn dedication of yourselves to God in Christ, I would advise you to make use of the following words, or something of the same import.

'O LORD GOD, the Maker of heaven and earth! by 'whose *word*, and for whose *glory*, I and all creatures were 'made: I now come to acknowledge thee as the Author of my 'being, and the preserver of my life, and the giver of every 'thing I enjoy. And therefore do now submit myself to thee, 'as my rightful owner and sovereign Lord. *Father, I have 'sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am not worthy 'to be called thy child:* I shall think myself highly honoured, 'and very happy, if thou wilt but *receive me* as one of thy '*meanest servants*. I here bring thee a *creature* of thine own, 'that has been *straying* from thee. This *soul* and *body* now 'prostrate at thy footstool, I humbly offer unto thee; that thou

'mayest *go over* thy work *again*, and *create me anew* after 'thine *own image*; and so will I be thy *faithful servant as long* 'as *I live*.

'O blessed Jesus! if *thou* wilt now take my *part*, and plead 'my *cause* with the Father, I am ready to profess myself *thy dis-* 'ciple, upon thine *own terms*; and to *follow thee* (if my heart 'deceive me not) *whithersoever thou goest*. I do sincerely give 'up myself to thy *teaching* and *instruction*: *O give me under-* 'standing! that I may *know the truth as it is in thee*. I do un- 'feignedly consent to thy *government*; and with a mind willing 'to obey thee, I can now say, Lord, *what wilt thou have me to* 'do? I will ascribe all the honour of my salvation to thy meri- 'torious *death*, and powerful *intercession*: and in these alone 'will I repose my trust.

'And now, if my Lord will undertake that his *grace shall* 'be sufficient for me, there is nothing that I shall think too 'difficult to *attempt*, or too *much* to *suffer for thee*. I do list 'myself this day under thy banner, as the great *captain of my* 'salvation; affrighted at myself, to think that I have so long 'been under the power and tyranny of the *devil*, whom I shall 'from this moment *resist to the uttermost*. I am persuaded this 'world is nothing but *vanity*, *and vexation of spirit*; and there- 'fore shall set myself to be thy *help*, and according to thy *ex-* 'ample to *conquer* it, and bring it *into subjection*. I found my 'own heart corrupt, wicked and deceitful, and therefore I will 'no longer pretend to manage for myself, but shall rejoice to 'give up every thought, and *will*, and *affection* intirely to thee 'I am now desirous to be thine, so as not to be anothers: thine, 'and not the devils; thine, and not the world's; thine, and not 'my own.

'To thee, O holy Spirit! I acknowledge myself *indebted* 'for these and all other good inclinations: And, that I may be 'enabled to *hold to* my present purposes, and to *improve* in a 'holy heavenly disposition of mind, I now *cast myself upon* 'thee, for all *direction* and *assistance*, which my circumstances

'from time to time may require. Henceforward, I shall *yield* 'myself to thy *conduct*, and influence: and shall make it my 'care to attend to all thy *motions* and *convictions*; both in 'performing my *duty*, and abstaining from *sin*; and so to do 'those things that may be most pleasing to thee.

'Thus, O Father, Son, and Spirit! with my whole heart 'I desire *freely* and *fully* to devote myself to thee; chusing thee 'for my *everlasting portion*, and promising to serve thee as 'my *supreme Master* and Lord, whilst I have a being.

'And as a proof of my *sincerity*, and of my ardent desire 'to *make good* such a profession, I am willing to bind myself, 'by *setting my hand* to all this; that it may be a witness *for*, 'or *against* me, as I behave myself *agreeably*, or *disagreeably*, 'to what I now do.'

* * * *

This I would advise you to *read* over and over, before you subscribe it. And if there be any *particular expressions*, that you cannot so *fully* make your *own*, as may be necessary to the affixing your *name*, you will do well to make *such alterations*, as you think may render it more suitable to your *own case*. But whenever you *sign* this, or any other instrument of the like nature, let your minds be as free as possible from all other affairs; that you may be the more *perfectly engaged* in such a transaction, and the more *deeply impressed* by it.

LASTLY, What farther remains, is *only to abide by what you have done, and to try how far you can go, in amending your lives and actions.*

'Tis possible, that after the most solemn surrender of yourselves to God, you may yet for a while *think* you are *neglected* by him. Yea, your temptations may be so much the *stronger*, and your conflicts the greater, for a time, that you may *think* you are in a *worse* condition than *before* you laid yourselves under such engagements. *We are not ignorant of the devices* of the

devil; who, when he finds you are like to be *rescued* from his dominion, will give you all the *disturbance* and *trouble* that is in his power. But this, however, should not occasion any *dislike* of what you have done, or any *distrust* of the mercy of God, to whom you have committed your souls.

If you think your prayers, and your offerings, have not *yet gone up with acceptance* before your Lord, you must repeat them, and *cry* the *louder;* as the two *blind men* did, when Christ had *passed by them;* JESUS! *thou Son of David, have mercy on us.* Yea, if you should interpret his language towards *you,* to be the same with that, to the *woman of Canaan;* *it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs;* yet still *true humility* will enable you to *form a plea* from thence; not to *fix* a *discouragement* in yourselves upon it. Lord, I acknowledge myself a vile, unworthy creature; if I am set amongst the dogs, it is but where I deserve to be: but let me not meet with *worse* treatment than *they* do, which are allowed to *eat of the crumbs that fall* from their master's *table.* O let down something from thyself, that may be a token of thy owning and accepting me; though it should be never so *small a favour,* it shall be to me a *valued one.* But let not my Lord be angry, if I go on to say; That though I am not worthy, *with dogs* to gather the *crumbs* that fall from *thy table,* yet *I will not let thee go,* until thou bless me with *children's blessings.* Mat. xv. 26.

Thus if we not only *ask,* and *seek,* but continue to *knock;* and, with an unwearied importunity, solicit for grace and mercy; we shall not be finally disappointed. We are most sure we have to do with one, that is *able* to save to the uttermost: And it would not be so hard, to be assured of his *willingness* to help and save us, if it was not one part of our sin and misery, in a natural state, to be distrustful and afraid of the great God. These fears and suspicions (among other disorders) we are seeking to be *delivered from,* in our *regeneration;* and therefore must not give way to them, however we may find reason to *complain* of them.

But to proceed to the other part of this last direction; you must *try how far you can go in amending your lives and actions.* Try, though you *fall short* of what you attempt: it will make you more sensible of your *own weakness* and insufficiency: it will shew you *where* all your help and strength lies: and it will make you *more earnest* in imploring aid and assistance *from above.*

Try what you can do to *restrain* yourselves from the *sins* you have been most apt to commit. Possibly upon exerting your resolution and endeavours this way, you may find some sins *more easily* forsaken and subdued, than you could have expected. Possibly you may find, the *grace* you have been seeking after, has been *given in*, even whilst you were *praying* for it. However, there are some *common actions*, that may be altered and reformed, by the help of *common grace*: and these, you must first begin with. For instance; he that used to spend his *Lord's day* in the *fields* or in *public houses*, or in *visiting* his *friends*; may with the same, perhaps less *bodily labour*, go to the *place* of God's worship, or to *converse* with those that would be *serviceable* to him in the matters of *religion.* He that could *lie*, and *swear*, and *curse*, and *profane*, the *name* of God; may as easily be *silent*, as employ his tongue in such a manner. He that could *defraud*, or *strike*, or *injure*, his neighbour, cannot pretend want of power to forbear such actions. Every one must be sensible, upon the first mention of these things, that it requires greater power to *do* them, than to be *still* and *unactive*, and do nothing at all.

Now, if you can for the present, go no farther than this: it is something very considerable towards the *reformation* I am speaking of. It is *one half* of the work, to Isa. i. 16. 17. *cease to do evil*; and the *other* half is, *to learn to do well.* And if a good God observes us striving to please him, in the former respect; we have abundant reason to trust him, as to the latter: That he will *furnish* us for *every good* work, and enable us, more and more, to *abound therein.* It is observable, that when the *prodigal was*

yet a great way off, the *father saw him, and ran to meet him:* and he has not less concern for, or regard to, returning prodigals *now*, than he had in *former times*. He is as ready to meet, and help, and encourage them as ever.

So that to close this head; where serious *consideration*, *prayer*, and *devoting ourselves* to God, is accompanied with the *best endeavours* of which we are capable; we may then comfortably expect, and should wait for, the special *grace* and assistance, of a divine Spirit, that he may work in us yet more effectually, to our *complete sanctification* and *salvation*.

In the *conclusion* of this *chapter*, let me engage those that are, themselves, in a safe *state* (if any such should look over this Treatise) to *pray* earnestly, and with a hearty concern, for them that may now be in the *struggles* of this *new Birth*. Those that cannot help them any *other way*, yet may do it by their *prayers*. You should therefore intreat for them, that they may not strive, or be under convictions *in vain;* but that they may become the *children* of *God*, by partaking of his nature, and so be brought into his *family*.

Every one that is thus added to the *Church* of Christ, brings so much more of his *presence* and *Spirit* into the *assembly* where he worships, as he is hereby possessed of: yea, he adds strength to *a Redeemer's interest* in the world. He adds also to the *joy* of *heaven;* and will in a particular manner be a *joy* and a *crown* to those that are any way *instrumental* in bringing him to God.

Let us then be very fervent in our petitions for such: that the *wit*, or *malice*, or *vices* of those with whom they converse, may not prevent the good effect of any serious impressions that have been made on their souls; nor the *assaults* and *suggestions* of the *devil*, discourage them. And, as many of the children of religious parents, are now become *dissenters* of that which is good; and are taking part with the profane, and irreligious world; so should we double our requests to God, that he would bring in *others*. For my own part, I am not without

hope, that even those, who are *brought up* in *sin* and *folly*, may yet become *witnesses* for God: and that many who are *enemies*, may yet become *examples* of *true inward piety* and religion, in the midst of a *crooked perverse generation*.

CHAP. IV.

The Evidences of being Born again.

THE design of this chapter is to set before you the *particular instances* of that change, which is wrought in the *hearts* and *lives* of them that are said to be *born again*. These are sometimes put into the *explication*, but I rather choose to insist on them as *evidences* of the *new Birth*. *Some* things I may have occasion to mention, that are necessarily *included* in the account of those first impressions from above, that are saving and effectual: *Others* there are that will be found only, and wholly *consequent* thereupon. But I think it most proper, and useful, to consider *both together;* that we may have the more full and complete view of them; and so be able to pass a truer judgment upon ourselves, whether we are really renewed or not.

I heartily wish, that such as have been *deceiving* themselves, with an imagination that all *is well with them*, would read over and think of the following evidences of a saving change, till they *become sensible* of their state and condition. And I should rejoice to contribute any thing towards the *peace* and *satisfaction* of those that are full of *doubts* and *fears*, but yet truly *regenerate;* by helping them to produce such proofs of their being the children of God, as may be safely depended upon*.

* Depended upon not as the foundation, but *as* genuine and satisfactory *evidences*. EDITOR.

Let it be considered, then, that wherever a saving change is wrought, it will discover itself, both in the mind and temper *inwardly*, and in the conversation and behaviour *outwardly*.

I. When a man is truly regenerate, *there are plain evidences of his being so, in his mind and temper*.

Though the *different*, and nobler exercise of the reasonable powers, and altering the *general bent* and disposition of the soul, may not be *so discernable* in *some* as in *others*; yet there is enough to be observed in *all*, if they strictly look into themselves, to determine this matter,....whether such a *change* be *really* wrought in them, or not.

1. The spirit of him that is born again, *is very lowly and humble*.

When renewing grace reached the heart of a poor *publican*, and first taught him to *pray* an acceptable *prayer* to God, he did not think himself worthy so much as to approach the *temple* or any thing that was *sacred*; he *stood afar off*, and *smote* upon his *breast*; in very *short* but very *humble* language, pouring out his soul before the Almighty,.....*God be merciful to me a sinner!* Luke xviii. 13.

A principle of grace, does so much *greaten* our views of the *divine perfections*; and, in such a manner, represent the *whole* of God's *proceedings* towards the children of men; that *self* sinks into *nothing*: And we know not where to cast ourselves into a place or posture *low enough*, when we lift up our eyes towards him that *dwelleth in the heavens*.

Yea, there is a mighty alteration, as to the *lowliness* and *humility* of those that have been under the influences of a regenerate SPIRIT, even toward their *fellow-creatures*. To this is owing (what you may possibly have seen, and wondered at) the exceeding *reverence* and *respect* which has been shewn, by some, toward those *ministers* that have been instruments of their

conviction and conversion. Though before, such persons would have been ready to treat men of our character with *insolence* or *disregard;* yet *now*, they esteem us worthy of *double honour:* and think they cannot have too great a veneration, for those that are truly *serious*, and have been any way serviceable to to make them *so.*

And then further; this humility and *poverty of spirit* will shew itself, in one instance or other toward *all:* He that is *born of the Spirit*, looks upon them that he thinks are thus renewed, as the *excellent ones of the earth;* and is ready to prefer the attainments and graces of almost *every such person* that he meets with, before his *own.* And where any appear contrary to him, he yet carries it with great meekness toward them, and is particularly careful not to give a just occasion of offence to them. Yea, such is the character of the true
1 Pet. v. 5. christian, that he is *cloathed with humility:* This is what shews itself in every condition of life; and becomes a dress that is worn at all times.

2. The general and prevailing disposition of a soul that is born again, *will be very sincere and upright.*

Folly, and falsehood, and perverseness, are naturally bound up in our heart. Whilst unrenewed, it may be
Ps. xxxix. 6. said of *every man*, that he *walketh in a vain shew:* He sets up those things for *excellencies* in himself, that are mere *vanities*, and of no intrinsic value; or else, he *pretends* to those *virtues*, and recommending qualifications, of which he is *really destitute*, and would be esteemed quite *another* person to what in *fact* and in *truth* he is. He would be thought to *know* things of which he is sadly *ignorant:* I mean, the things of God and his *salvation;* and will talk as boldly, and peremptorial about them, as if all the proceedings of the *Judge* of quick and dead, were to be determined by his *thoughts* and *tongue.* He would be thought possessed of those graces, to which his life is a *contradiction;* and will needs assume to himself the honour of being a member of the *true*

church, when he has nothing of *true religion*. Thus also in the whole of his conversation and affairs in the world, if you strictly observe such a man, you will generally find him under one *disguise* or another; except when he is gratifying his *humour* or his *vices*, and then indeed you may come to a thorough knowledge of him.

The *reverse* of this, is the character of him that is born from above. He is one that is truly sensible of the *emptiness* and *deceit* of all the *gay* and *wealthy* appearances of men in this world: and he is ready to *confess* the insufficiency of all these things, either to add to his *worth*, or to make him *happy*. And then in matters of religion, he is one that does not carry his *pretensions* to knowledge, to goodness, to inward qualifications, or outward privileges, *farther* than what he finds *good ground* for in himself. He does not affect to *appear* better than he *is*; but in *secret*, and at *heart*, is many degrees beyond what he seems to be before others. Yea, I have sometimes thought, that to look upon a good man in his *weaknesses* and *imperfections*; and to hear him acknowledge, as the *saints* in scripture have done, his very *worst* failings and miscarriages; has added a *lustre* to that part of his character, that *he is without guile*. And if that expression be fully attended to, I do not any where know a *brighter* description of one that is born again, or a *better* evidence of our being *new creatures*. John i. 47.

3. The *understanding of him that is born again, is enlightened to discern those things of which before it was ignorant, or at least, to which it shewed no just regard.*

Hence it is, that the scripture makes use of such *phrases* to describe this change, as from *foolish* being made *wise*, and being turned from *darkness* to *light*: Ye *were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord*. Hereby intimating to us, that the *discoveries* which renewing grace makes to the *soul*, are like the breaking in of a *light* to the *bodily eyes* when a man has sat some time in *darkness*. Whilst the room where he sat was

dark, though the very *same* furniture, paintings, and ornaments, were in it, that *afterward appear*, yet he sees *nothing at all* of them; but as soon as the *light* shines upon him, he has then a great deal of pleasure and entertainment in *viewing* what is *about him*. Thus, the great *truths* of *religion* are most fully revealed, and laid before us; but we *perceive* them *not* (at least in their excellency and importance) till a *heavenly light* shines into our minds: and then with the apostle, we are ready to cry out, *O the depth of the riches both of the knowledge and wisdom of God!* Rom. xi. 33.

Those especially, that have been brought up *strangers* to every thing of a religious nature, that have *never been* instructed in the scriptures, or the first principles of christianity; have an *amazing scene* opened to them, when first they turn their thoughts to religion, and are taught to *realize* the things that are *eternal*. Such converts are thoroughly sensible of the *illumination* of their minds by a renewing Spirit; and nothing needs more to be said under this head, with respect to them. But in other cases, when men have attained a *speculative knowledge* of the generally received notions of religion; or where, from *their infancy* any have *known the scriptures*, and have learned by *heart* the chief things contained therein, it is not so easy to discover the *difference* there is in their *understanding* of divine things, *before* and *after* their conversion.

Natural reason is manifestly more lively and penetrating in *some* than in *others:* and the several ways of *education*, do make a very great difference even in them, that are of *equal capacities:* Insomuch, that the *first* principles of religion *written in our hearts*, may be understood and talked of with *greater clearness*, by many who are guided only by *natural light*, than by others that are enlightened with *saving knowledge:* but then, these principles have not the *same* effect and influence upon *both*. There is another kind of *attention* to them, *relish* for them, and *practising* upon them, where they are *spiritually* discerned, than when they are understood, only by the force of good *natural parts;* or the advantages of a *polite education*.

And there are *some truths* in the christian religion of such a nature, that the apostle says the *natural man* (even the man of reasoning and learning) *cannot receive* them; but *only he*, who is *taught* by the Spirit of God. 1 Cor. xi. 14.

We may very well compare the *rational* and *spiritual* man, when reading the terms of salvation, and the promises of the *gospel*, to a *lawyer*, and an *heir*, reading of the same *will*. The *lawyer* considers only the sense and expression of the several articles, so as to observe what is the force and import of them *according to law:* but the heir reads every article with a very distinct *application* of it to *himself*, in what is *bequeathed* to him; and diligently observes what is *required* of him. He forms his measures and conduct thereupon, lays it by as his *treasure*, and as the *security* upon which he depends for all that he enjoys. Such a kind of knowledge is that, which the *renewed mind* is furnished with, as to *spiritual* and *heavenly* things. A knowledge, that shews us our *interest* in them: and so must needs excite another kind of *attention* and *regard*, than where they are made matters of *mere speculation*.

So also, in the case of those that, from their *childhood* have been acquainted with the *holy scripture;* we shall find a very great difference between their *first sense* of things, and *that*, which by *renewing grace* they are brought to. The memories of such, are stored with variety of excellent and useful passages from the *word of God:* they have learnt perhaps, several *summaries* of religion: the *articles* of *faith*, and the *rules* of *duty*, which are commonly received in the christian world, may be very readily and exactly *recited* by them: but all is *cold* and *ineffectual*, till the Spirit of *regeneration* gives them their proper force and influence. While they *pronounce* the most solemn, and substantial, and self-concerning truths, yet all passes merely for *words of course*, till divine grace makes them sensible of the vast *weight* and *meaning* of what has been rendered so familiar to them.

We may therefore conclude, from these several instances, that wherever a *saving change* is wrought in a soul, it will introduce, and improve, *such a knowledge* of the things of God, as those that are in a *natural* state are *strangers* to. If not in the things *themselves* that are known, yet in a *manner* of knowing them, I believe this may *always* be observed.

After I have *thus* explained, the understanding being *enlightened*, in him that is *born again*; I think there is no room left for any man to conceive well of himself, merely, from his having imbibed a set of *good*, or as some would speak, *orthodox notions* in religion. Nor will a man's being furnished with a set of *new notions*, that may for a while *surprise* and *entertain* him, prove, that he is a *new creature*. Nor yet, on the other hand, can any one reasonably conclude from what has been said, that his state is *bad*, if his knowledge of divine things be *affecting*, and duly *operative*; though it may not be so great, or so lately obtained, as to appear any thing *extraordinary* to him.

4. *The will of him that is born again, is brought to an entire submission and obedience to the will of God.*

Some of the *first* words, that converting grace put into the lips of St Paul, were,.....*Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* From which time, a furious self-opinionated *persecutor*, became a tractable submissive *learner* of the *truth, as it is in Jesus.*

O the power of divine grace, to remove all the *prejudices* and *obstinacy* of men! and to correct the *stubbornness* and *reluctancy* of the will, against the *laws*, or the *providence* of God. By this means a true convert is enabled to get above the instigations of a deceitful envious *world*, the sinful vanity of his *own* spirit, or the malignity and subtilty of the tempter. While our wills are determined by the common *behaviour*, and *inclinations* of those among whom we live; or directed by some *reigning corruption* in ourselves: or subject to the *wiles* and *suggestions* of

the wicked one; there is an *enmity* to God, and to what he *requires* of us: but as soon as a principle of grace prevails in the soul, it brings every thought and inclination into *subjection*.

Hereby we are brought greatly to revere the *will* of God, in his *word:* And the *commandment* is acknowledged to be *holy*, *just*, and *good*. Holy in its *precepts;* just in its *threatnings;* good in its *promises;* and *all*, in its great *end* and *design*, most excellently contrived and fit to be subscribed to in every thing. Rom. vii. 12.

Grace teaches us also to *bow* to the *will* of God in his *providence*. Though our own projects are crossed, and those prospects which we thought we had before us may be cut off: yet we are taught to acquiesce in the sovereign disposals of our great Governor and Owner, in every occurrence of our lives. Our schemes of *action* are all submitted to him; our *possessions* and *enjoyments* are all resigned into his hands; and our *expectations* are made entirely dependent upon him, to *accomplish*, or *over-rule* them, as he sees best.

Not that there is such a subjection in the will of a regenerate man, as to make *no resistance* to the *commands* or *disposals* of almighty God: for then there would never be any of those *struggles* or *conflicts*, which good men continually complain of, between *grace* and *corruption:* but there is such a subjection in him that is *born again*, That, in his *esteem*, he gives a *preference* to the will of God; and, in his *endeavours*, strives to be more and more conformed to it; and, in *fact*, this does at *last prevail* against all the *enslaving* motions of an untoward volition and inclination.

Solomon, in the book of Proverbs, frequently describes an ill man as one that has a *perverse* and *froward heart;* which cannot be *led* and *governed* by any methods or directions, though never so wise or good. He that is *born again*, must therefore be delivered, in some measure, from this disorder; and as to the *general bent* of his mind, must become *tractable*

and *submissive*, ready to yield to every thing that would make him *wiser* and *better*.

I shall only add here; that where this is sought for as an evidence of regeneration, we are not to form a judgment, either of ourselves or others, from some *particular indispositions* of the soul; from its *untoward temper* at some times, and under extraordinary provocations; but from the general, and *most settled disposition* of it.

5. *The conscience of him that is born again, is tender and faithful.*

Natural conscience is neither so *soon* alarmed upon a miscarriage, nor so *easily* convinced of a fault, nor so *much* concerned at what is amiss, nor so *hard* to forgive and *quiet* itself after an offence, as the *renewed conscience* is; so that in all these instances, we may observe a very great difference between the regenerate, and the unregenerate.

Natural conscience is alarmed, only when men are guilty of *open* and *scandalous* sins: the renewed conscience takes very great notice even of *lesser* and *secret faults*.

When natural conscience convicts of sin, it does what it can to *colour over* and *excuse* it; and to make it appear in the most *favourable manner*, upon a representation of it: the renewed conscience is careful to look upon every thing as it *really* is; and to take in every *circumstance* of a transgression, whether it make it seem *greater*, or less, than of *itself* it might be.

While the natural conscience needs the utmost *exciting* and awakening, to make it sensible of the *great evil* there is in sin: the renewed conscience needs no *arguments* or *eloquence* to move it, but it is presently filled with a very deep *uneasiness* and *concern*, at the thought of what has been amiss.

Natural conscience *is soon silenced*, or *diverted* and made easy, by *hiding* or *forgetting* the sin that troubled it: but the

renewed conscience, when under a sense of *guilt*, is like the *eye* which has got a *mote* in it; *restless* and rolling itself to and fro, and *watering* till it has wept it out; never *quiet* till it has some hope of a *renewed pardon*.

But this, however, is to be observed; that even the renewed conscience is not *equally* impressive in all *persons;* nor in the same person at all *times*. Those that are of *bold* and *dispassionate* tempers are not impressed to such a degree, as those that are *timorous* and of *quick passions:* nor does a good man, when under desertion, or in the ebbings of grace, feel either so *soon*, or so *much*, as at other times when he has offended. Nevertheless, where a man is become a *new creature*, I think it may be discovered, by the *impressiveness* of his conscience, *more* or *less*, in all the foregoing respects.

6. *The affections of him that is Born again, are prevailingly spiritual and heavenly.*

I say *prevailingly* spiritual, because there are in the *best* of men, very great mixtures of sensual worldly *affections* and *passions*. And there is a very wide *difference*, amongst those that may be accounted good people, in the *exercise* of these.

Some have gained a *generous contempt* of every thing in this world; and, with *ardent desires*, are continually pressing forward, toward the amiable mansions of the saints above: Whilst others are *caring* and *contriving* about the present life; and making, what they think *needful provision*, for future years. Some there are, who can freely and cheerfully devote their *substance* and their *time*, to any religious *service* and *occasion;* whilst others are perpetually acting what they call the *cautious* and the *wary* part; and are too apt to *over-value* their outward ease and enjoyments. Some behave themselves, as if they had no other objects of their *hatred*, and *aversion*, and *shame*, and *anger*, but sin and folly; whilst others find a *thousand things*, to provoke these several *passions* in them. Some there are, whose *joys*, and *comforts*, in the ways of God, do

greatly abound; others seem to be persons of *sad* and *sorrowful* spirits. Some have a mighty *zeal* for religion, and the interest of Christ in the world; others are more *calm* and *silent*, and contracted in their views of things. Some have scarce *any fear* of calamities or afflictions; others are in *perpetual slavery* and bondage through the *fear* of *death*, or *poverty*, or some *approaching evil*. So that very great allowances are to be made, for different capacities, constitutions, and outward circumstances, when we look to the *change* in our *affections*, as an evidence of our being born again.

But where any man is become a *new creature*, his love, his hatred, his desires, his aversions, his hopes, his joys, his anger, his zeal, his fears, his sorrows, his shame, his comforts, his cares, must all be exercised upon new and more deserving *objects*, or in a new and better *manner* than they generally are in a *natural state*. In *this*, especially, we ought to observe the *different exercise* of them; that, whereas before they were *hasty*, *irregular*, and *impetuous;* after renovation, they became more subject to *restraint* and *good government*.

Thus far you have an account of the *inward change* that is wrought by regenerating grace.

II. *There are other evidences of the new Birth, in the outward behaviour and conversation.*

By what is *outward* and more obvious, we may gain a fuller and surer knowledge of what is *inward* and more liable to be mistaken. The *following* things ought therefore to be considered, with those *foregoing*, before we pass a decisive and determinate judgment upon ourselves, as to our being in a regenerate, or unregenerate state. For certain it is, that if the *temper*, *understanding*, *will*, *conscience*, and *affections*, be renewed; both our words and actions will be some way affected thereby; and that in such instances as these.

1. He that is born again, *is careful to avoid, and to watch against, all sin.*

St. John tells us in a text before quoted, *He that is born of God doth not commit sin:* No, not of any kind, so as to approve of it, and continue in it. A regenerate person hates and strives against sin, *as sin:* That is, as a thing contrary to the law of God, and displeasing to him; and therefore he strives against *every* sin; having the same reason to shew a regard to the commands and the pleasure of Almighty God, in *one* instance, as in *another*.

Notwithstanding natural inclination, or any outward inviting circumstances; yet still the language of a true convert, to every solicitation that is sinful, is like that of Joseph, *How can I do this* or the other *wickedness*, and *sin against God?* Gen. xxxix. 9.

Again; Renewing grace extends to a striving against secret sins, and such as lie out of the view and observation of others, as well as against public crimes and scandals: and he that makes conscience of these, fearing to offend or sin against God, when *he only* is the witness of what is done, has an undoubted evidence of true grace.

Farther; Regenerating grace will teach a man to watch against those very sins that, through corruption, may arise from grace itself: Such as spiritual pride, and security. By this we are directed to subdue all conceit of ourselves, and contempt of others, to which our spiritual attainments might prompt us. And we are also instructed not to grow *secure*, as if our work was done, and we were out of danger, as soon as we find a change wrought in us. The more grace prevails, the more sensible will it make us of our being *unprofitable servants*.

Nay, what is still more: a principle of grace will make us watchful against the very occasions, and opportunities of sinning. This will put instances, and particular meanings, to the general petition,....*Lead us not into temptation*. And it will teach us to walk and act circumspectly; so as that our lives and our prayers, may agree, and not contradict one another.

2. He that is born again, *has a constant regard to every duty*.

A principle of divine life will not suffer a man to rest in *negative goodness;* but will put him upon shewing a due respect to every *positive command*, and every institution of the gospel.

The *new birth* introduces a man into a most busy life: It shews him a great deal necessary to be done which before he was a stranger to. He that had his frequent returns of idle and unemployed hours, now sees work enough for every hour and moment of his life. And he grudges much of that time, that is spent in repairing the strength, and securing the health and good temperament of the body, or in attending to its disorders.

He that has a thorough sense of religion, will devote some part of his time to the service of his God, and the improvement of his mind; and some also to the service of his neighbour, and his relatives: Which, together with the minding of his worldly affairs, must keep him constantly employed. There are many duties both secret and social, with reference to God and man, of which we are insensible, till we are instructed in them, and urged to the performance of them, by the renewing influences of a divine Spirit. This unfolds a vast scheme of things, wrapt up in such a summary of religion, as that,..... *What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly*, and to *love mercy*, and to *walk humbly with thy God?* Micah vi. 8.

He that is born again, looks without exception, or reserve, to the duties of both tables; and to those of all relations: not contenting himself, in what is low and common; but endeavouring, that his good works may *so shine before men, as that they may* be induced in like manner, *to glorify his Father which is in heaven.*

Matt. v. 16.

And then, he is careful to *hold on* in the way of his duty, whatever trials and oppositions he may meet with; excepting in such cases, as disable him from attending to it.

Thus allowing for unavoidable infirmities, and surprizes, (which the best of men are subject to) the general behaviour of him that is renewed, will shew that he is so.

3. He that is born again, *is particularly careful of his words.*

As they are undoubtedly in a bad state, who say with those in the twelfth Psalm, *With our tongue will we prevail, our lips are our own, who is Lord over us?* So, on the contrary, we are sure of the good state of all them, that are concerned to govern their lips, and to order their words aright. According to St James, *If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.* Chap. iii. 2.

Renewing grace will teach a man to take heed that he *sin not with his tongue;* but rather to lay *absolute restraints* upon himself, and *keep his mouth as with a bridle*, when he is in company that might provoke him to offend. And even at times when he allows himself the *greatest freedom* and liberty of conversation, he is yet strictly observant of the rules of decency, sobriety, and religion. Ps. xxxix. 1.

He is careful not to blaspheme, or trifle with the name of God; or to make a *jest* of any thing that is *sacred.* He will not talk lightly and unconcernedly of any immorality, or make a mock at sin. He is careful not to injure his absent neighbour; nor to provoke the passions and resentments of him that's present. His conversation is guarded against every thing that is immodest, unjust, lying, or discontented: And, whatever may come under the notice of that foolish talking and jesting, which are not convenient, he is studious to avoid. Eph. v. 4.

Farther; the conversation of a good man is not only harmless and inoffensive, but it is serious and religious too. Upon all proper occasions, he loves to be talking of the best things, and telling what God has done for him: *Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare* (says the Psalmist) *what he hath done for my soul.* He loves to be conversing with his fellow-travellers, of the *place* they are going to, and the *way* that lies before them: and, if at any time he forbears such discourse when in good company, it is either, because he finds the thoughts of those he Psal. lxvi. 16.

is with turned another way; or, because he suspects his own ability; or, because he thinks some other season may give greater force to what he would suggest: but still, in the frame and temper of his mind, he is always set towards heaven, and heavenly things; and it is as easy and familiar to him that is born from above, to converse of what is spiritual, as for those that are born only of the flesh, to talk of what they shall *eat*, and *drink*, and *put on*, and of what occurs daily to their senses.

4. He that is born again, *will manage every common action, and worldly affair, so as to serve a religious end and purpose.*

Saving grace will cure, that otherwise incurable evil, a *worldly selfishness;* and will teach us to prefer the good of our *souls*, before the ease or gratification of our *bodies;* and the interest of Jesus Christ, before our *own concerns* and *interest;* and so, to bring every affair and business in *this* world, into an entire subserviency to our hopes and expectations in the world *to come.*

He, that has been brought up to any honest employment, is not required, upon his becoming a *new creature*, to *quit* his calling; and retire from his station, into a *monastery*, or a *desert:* 'Tis sufficient that he acts upon *new principles*, and with *new ends* and designs, in his pursuit of such an employment. He is diligent in business, not from a *covetous* or *ambitious* aim of enriching himself; but from a *conscientious regard* to the command and appointment of God; who has made it every man's duty to *labour*, and to employ himself one way or other, so as to be useful in the world. Nor is it so much the *fear* of *want*, that excites the industry of a good man, as a desire to have something that may enable him to be *friendly* and *charitable*, to those about him; to have something *to give to him that needeth*, Eph. iv. 28.

He, that is possessed of a large estate, is not obliged to *give it up* when he becomes a true convert; but only to *manage* it so, as to render both his substance and his interest, and his

time, and his abilities, as far as he can, serviceable to the promoting of religion, and the welfare of others in the world: And wherever a principle of divine life has been infused into the soul, it will teach a man to *consecrate* all he can to such purposes.

If a man that is renewed, give up himself to any acts of friendship and hospitality, entertaining others and conversing with them, it is not to gratify a brutish sensuality; but to shew a kind disposition, to settle a good acquaintance, by mutual services to advance each other's welfare, and to join their thoughts and endeavours upon every occasion wherein they are equally concerned.

Once more; he that is inwardly and prevailingly religious, will manage all recreations and exercises for the health of his body, and all his necessary refreshments, so as to render him more fit for the duties of his station, and the service of his God. In the apostle's language, *Whether he eats or drinks, or whatever he does, he does all to the glory of God,* 1 Cor. x. 31.

5. The last evidence I shall mention of a person's being born again, as it appears in the behaviour and outward actions, is, *an abounding in all proper instances of love and charity toward his brother.*

St John tells us expressly, *That he who loveth not his brother, is not of God.* And this is argued 1 John iii. 10. in a following chapter, from its being the commandment of God, to *love our brethren,* as well *as to love himself;* and no man can have a due regard to the one, but he must also observe the other. This love, we are elsewhere told, must not be in *word or in tongue* only, *but in deed* and *in truth:* that is, our actions must be such as may truly contribute to the advantage and benefit of our brother.

That, which in a natural state is the cause of men's acting *injuriously* toward their neighbours, (I mean *self-love;*) renewing grace will make the rule and motive of *doing good* to them. This will explain and enforce that command, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

Self-love, we see generally, provokes men to strife and contention; defaming others, to increase their own reputation; defrauding others, to increase their own gains; and, in almost every case, not regarding what hurt is done to others, so that it make for their own advantage. Whereas if you look to one that is under the influence of divine grace, the *love* that he has to *himself*, puts him upon all proper ways of shewing a concern for the *peace*, *good name*, and *prosperity* of his *neighbour*: and the more he finds in *himself* a desire of this or the other comfortable enjoyment, the more will he *do*, in such respects, for the help and relief of *others*.

As to that grand branch of charity, *almsgiving*, it is observable in the account of Zaccheus's conversion, that *salvation* was no sooner *come to his house*, but he presently says, *Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor*, &c. The contributions *then*, indeed, were *extraordinary*; and the case of Zaccheus might make it especially requisite, that *his* should be *so*; but *every* man that is brought into a state of grace, will think it his duty to consecrate *some proportion* of what he has to pious and charitable uses. For, let men pretend to what they will, you always find that their *expences* follow their prevailing *affections*: What they have the greatest *love* and *liking to*, they are most ready to *spend upon*. So that if a man be savingly changed and *renewed in his temper* and *affections*, it will appear from his *religious expences*, as well as from the other actions of his life. Luke xix. 8.

And now, I think, nothing more needs to be added for the enabling us to judge of ourselves, whether we are *born again*, or not.

But I am sensible these evidences of a man's being in a good state, are like to meet with a very different *reception* from different *persons*.

Some have found out ways to keep themselves easy, and to hope well as to their future condition, where their *lives* and *tempers* are quite contrary to what I have been describing. *Others* will only *pick out*, here and there, an *evidence* that best

pleases them; and whilst they drop many things that are requisite to their being thoroughly changed and renewed, are yet *presumptuous* enough to rely upon some *few instances* which they may produce, in their own spirits or behaviour. A third sort of people there are, who imagine they shall *never come up* to such a state as has been described; and therefore cannot obtain any *composed satisfying thoughts* of their own condition. Whilst some *few* may possibly discover in themselves, *all the marks* and evidences of the new birth, that are here set before them.

I shall therefore conclude the whole, in APPLYING myself, briefly, to each of these.

1. I would speak a little to them *that are at ease, and willing to think their state good, although their temper and their lives are quite contrary to what I have been describing.*

I heartily wish such persons would take time to consider, ...what their ease and good opinion of themselves, is owing to. If you keep yourselves easy by declining and neglecting all serious enquiries about your state, 'tis certainly *bad;* and the *less* you are concerned about it, and acquainted with it, the *worse* it is. You may read the *doom* of such as have *no understanding*, nor serious attention to things of this nature, in Isa. xxvii. 11. *For it is a people of no understanding; therefore he that made them, will not have mercy on them; and he that formed them, will shew them no favour.* No man in his wits can think, that the case of a condemned malefactor is *good*, because he does *not attend* to his sentence of condemnation; or that a person, who is languishing under a *mortal* distemper, is *well*, because he will not be *persuaded* that he is in a dangerous condition.

But farther; though you may not have been altogether thoughtless, yet if you have considered matters only so far as to take up some *general notions* of the *goodness* and *mercy* of God, that, may serve to make you easy in your sins, without engaging you to *forsake* and *repent* of them; you will then fall

under that dreadful sentence in Deut. xxix. 19, 20. He who thus *blesseth himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst;* (and so of any other sin that is lived in;) *the Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man;* [being the more provoked by his *presuming* on that goodness which he despises;] *and all the curses that are written in this book, shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name* (notwithstanding all his confidence) *from under heaven.*

Once more; if you have thought on such representations of the christian's happiness, and the christian's character, as those before laid down, with *aversion* and *detestation;* your case is deplorable indeed. I have heard of a *profane wretch*, that said, 'If heaven was filled with such company, as those that are *called saints* here on earth, he would never *desire to come there.*' But canst thou, man, so easily give up the thoughts of heaven? And be willing, instead of going thither, to lie down in *devouring flames? Think well*, I beseech thee, before thou renouncest the character, and the company of the saints. If thy soul is not gathered with *theirs*, it must be a companion of *devils.* There is no living any more between heaven and hell, when once thou art gone out of this world. Thy sensual delights will all be lost for ever; and leave thee under the torment of an insatiable thirst after them. Thy sinful companions will then increase thy misery; and thy own conscience will incessantly reproach thee for thy present folly. Then, with showry eyes, and with an aching heart, thou wilt look to the beauteous regions of *light* and *love;* where thou mightest have had a place; but from which thou art now condemned to an eternal banishment. *O that thou* wouldst know, *in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace!*

2. I would next say something to them *that are content, in being able to find out in themselves* some few *of the foregoing evidences, when at the same time* many things *are yet wanting to their being* savingly *renewed.*

If there be just reason for your attending to religion *at all*, the same reason there is for your making *thorough work* in it: Because, without this, our pretending to be religious will avail us nothing. He that professes to *keep the law*, or expects to be saved by the *gospel*, and yet stated- James ii. 10. ly *offends* either by omissions or commissions in *one point*, will be condemned as certainly, as if he had been *guilty of all.*

Some men are apt to think well of themselves for the sake of their *inward piety;* in which they apprehend they exceed many, that make a greater *shew of goodness* in their conversation and behaviour. Others judge of themselves, by their *outward profession;* and take up a good opinion of themselves, because they have *a name to live;* although in secret, and in their spirits, they are very much estranged from God, and the exercises of religion. The first of these, by pretending to have *good hearts*, may deceive themselves; and the latter, by taking care to preserve *a good name*, may deceive their neighbours: but neither the *one*, nor the *other*, can deceive or impose upon an omniscient God. We must *be* Rom. xii. 2. *transformed* by *the renewing of* our *minds;* and 1 Pet. i. 15. we must *be holy*, also, *in all manner of conversation;* if we would be *acceptable* in the sight of God.

Farther, there are some persons that glory in the *church* they are of, and in acts of *devotion* towards God; as if they needed no more, to prove they are in a good state: Whilst others boast of their being *just and charitable*, and observing their duty toward their *neighbour;* as if this alone were sufficient to save them. Whereas, if he that frequents the places of divine worship, lives in *enmity* and *hatred* to his *brother;* or in *covetousness*, *which is idolatry;* or in any *other sin* against the precepts of the *second table*, Christ has expressly disowned such. And, if he that is abounding in all expressions of love to his neighbour, does yet *refrain prayer before God*, and neglect the giving him that *honour* Matth. xxii. 37. which is *due unto his name;* he stands condemned as a despiser of the first and great commandment, both of the Old and New Testament.

In these and such like instances, men would have us dispense with the marks and evidences of true grace, that we may suit their several dispositions and attainments. But, however it may be for the interest of the leaders of parties, to mislead their followers; and however it may suit the inclinations of some easy-tempered men, to oblige *them* that they have a respect for; yet neither will the representations of one nor another be of any significancy, where they pervert or dissemble the scripture-account of things: *Then shall I not be ashamed*, says the Psalmist, *when I have respect unto* ALL *thy commandments*, Psalm cxix. 6.

3. It may be proper to hint a few things to them *that are savingly renewed, but yet are uneasy and perplexed about their state and condition, because they cannot discover all the aforementioned evidences in themselves.*

It is no unusual thing to meet with such, as in the judgment of those that are *acquainted* with them, may be esteemed *truly religious:* who yet labour under so many *doubts* and *discouragements* in their own spirits, that they cannot discern any thing that shall give satisfaction *to themselves.* To such, I would recommend the *following* considerations. Which I beg they would take time farther to enlarge upon, and to apply to their own case and circumstances.

Those that have but *lately* been under serious impressions, must make great allowances for the *weakness* of grace in its first beginnings. Though they have not that clear and full *knowledge* of divine things which they desire; nor that *government* of their passions and tempers, nor that raisedness and spirituality of their *affections* which some have attained to; yet so long as they are *sincerely endeavouring* to gain all this, and are attending to the proper appointed *means* of their doing so, they have abundance of reason to hope well of themselves.

Again; those that are under any darkness and disorder, by the *breaking out* of some *one sin*, that appears grievous and tormenting to them, must not expect to obtain a thorough composedness of mind, or any settled ease and peace of conscience,

till that is *sincerely repented* of. A sense of guilt, in *one* instance, will dash *all* other *evidences*, how great and considerable soever they may seem in the eyes of those that are acquainted with us.

Farther; there may not be a suitable sense of our *dependance* upon the Spirit of God; and so, for a while, persons may be under confusion and mistakes; hereby, to lead them to honour the Spirit, as they honour the Father, and the Son, in the great work of their conversion and regeneration. By our first awful apprehensions of God, and approaches to him, in our being born again, we honour the Father; by our earnest addresses to Jesus Christ, and seeking for the favour and acceptance of God, *in* and *through him*, we honour the Son: But then we must be brought to a direct application of ourselves to the Holy Spirit; that he may shew us how far this and the other evidence of grace belongs to *ourselves;* and may assist us, in forming a right judgment thereupon: and when we are once duly affected with a sense of his doing *this* for us, we then honour the Spirit, as our *Sanctifier* and *Comforter*. But I am persuaded, a great deal of perplexity of good people, is owing to their want of regular thoughts in this matter.

Sometimes, allowances must be made for *bodily distempers;* and for *pressing calamities* in the world; and for a *weakness* of *understanding*, and natural abilities; and for some *evil reports*, or *ill carriage* of those about us; any of which may very much disorder our *imaginations*, and obscure every evidence that might afford comfort to us.

But, these things being duly observed, such evidences as those before laid down, ought still to be insisted on: and we should give *all diligence*, to make this point sure.

The Last sort of persons I would address myself to, *are those, that have been able to discover in themselves the marks of their being born again, so as to be satisfied therewith.*

There is not a privilege of which human nature is capable, that can so much deserve to be gloried in as this, That we are the *children of God*. To be his children by *adoption*, is to have

a right to his kingdom, being *heirs* and *joint*
Rom. viii. 17. - *heirs with Christ Jesus.* And to be made children by *regeneration*, is to be *partakers of*
2 Pet. i. 14. *the divine nature.* And shall we not think *this* matter of glory?

Let us however take care, while we rejoice in our privilege, that we do not forget our duty. Let us *be*
Ephesians v. 1. *followers of God as dear children;* imitating his *perfections;* and endeavouring to *shew*
1 Peter. ii 9. *forth his praises*, and excellencies, to all that behold us.

A sense of our being *born again*, should encourage us to bear up against the *hatred and contempt* of the world. *If ye were of the world*, says our Saviour, *the world would love its own; but now I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you*, John xv. 19.

Yea, this should support us under all *kind of afflictions.* If I am *created anew* in Christ Jesus, I may certainly conclude, God will not forsake this *work of his own hands.* Those that are born from above, must expect discipline and correction from thence, till they have gone through this state of education: but they may humbly hope, that he who has begun a good work in them, will perfect it; and so bring *them to their Father's house, the inheritance of the saints in light.*

To add no more; This would make us think continually, of that state and world to which we are born. And when we have thought the farthest, still we must remember, that while we are here in our minority, we think as children, and express ourselves as such; but when we shall arrive at the full stature, and perfect knowledge of the heavenly inhabitants, our present weak and imperfect sense of things will be done
1 John. iii. 2. away. *Now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

END OF THE TREATISE ON BEING BORN AGAIN.

THE

Communicant's Spiritual Companion,

OR, AN

EVANGELICAL PREPARATION

FOR THE

LORD'S SUPPER.

IN WHICH

I. The Nature of the Ordinance is shewn.
II. The Dispositions requisite for a Profitable Participation thereof.

WHEREIN

The Careless Sinner is Admonished, the Formalist Detected and Reproved, the Feeble-minded Comforted, the Doubting Relieved, the Sincere Assisted, and the Faithful Confirmed.

WITH

MEDITATIONS, AND HELPS FOR PRAYER,

SUITABLE TO THE SUBJECT.

BY THE REV. THOMAS HAWEIS,
Rector of Aldwinckle, Northamptonshire; and Chaplain to the Right Honourable the Earl of Peterborow.

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PREFACE.

THE following Treatise upon the Sacrament, was drawn up at Oxford. It was a part of a course of catechetical lectures on Sunday afternoons. It pleased GOD, at the time of delivery, to bless them greatly to the instruction and edification of the people. I pray the Spirit of all grace, that he would still accompany them with his blessing.

READER, thou wilt find three points chiefly proposed in this work.

First, To open the conscience to a discovery of its guilt and misery, its great need of JESUS, and the salvation which is in him. This is the leading point in our most holy Religion; a soul unawakened to a sense of sin, and unaffected with the views of his inbred corruption, and departure from GOD, can have no more business at the LORD's Table, than a man in health has for a physician.

Secondly, To explain the true nature of the LORD's Supper, the intention of it, and the Privilege therein conferred on the Faithful. And here JESUS must needs be the *Alpha* and *Omega*. The institution is his, the things signified are his Body and Blood, the blessings conferred are all purchased by him, and freely bestowed on his Covenant people. In short, CHRIST is here peculiarly *all and in all*.

Thirdly, To enforce that universal surrender of heart to the Redeemer which his love to us justly demands; that as we declare solemnly our intention, to devote to him our bodies, souls, and spirits, "to "be a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to GOD, "which is our reasonable service;" we shew the truth of our professions by such a conversation as becometh godliness; not content with the lukewarm negligence of careless professors, but shewing the zealous diligence of active disciples; not resting on the ceremonious performance of an ordinance, but living every day in a course of communion with GOD.

The *Prayers* and *Meditations* are added as the necessary means to promote such a daily walking with GOD; for as we live daily pensioners on the divine grace, we must every day ask our daily bread, and in the field of the word collect the living manna. Certain it is, that a real Christian can no more live without prayer and the word of GOD, than a living body can subsist without proper nourishment; and they will be most flourishing in their soul's health, whose appetite for the sincere milk of the word is keenest, and who pray without ceasing.

May the GOD of all grace accept this mite cast into his Treasury, and make it effectual to the advancement of his own glory, and the salvation of redeemed souls.

THOMAS HAWIES.

ALDWINCKLE,
October 10, 1764.

THE

COMMUNICANT'S

SPIRITUAL COMPANION.

INTRODUCTION.

NO ORDINANCE more peculiarly merits the regard of all professors of the religion of JESUS, than that which seals to them the blessings of the Covenant of Grace. The decay of vital and spiritual religion is evident in nothing more than the general neglect of these holy mysteries: and a revival of it can never be hoped for till a serious concern about eternity awakens the soul to inquire about the nature of the gospel salvation, and the means of grace which lead to it: to effect this is the design of the following pages. The careless professor will here find, I trust, alarming notices of his danger, and calls to consideration; the ignorant, instruction; the fearful, solution of their doubts; the sincere, assistance; the strong, increasing light, support, and encouragement.

May the great Master of assemblies fix the following truths deeply and abidingly in the heart of every one who reads them.

CHAP. I.

Of the Nature of a SACRAMENT.

A SACRAMENT is defined by the church in our excellent though concise Catechism, to be "the outward and "visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, given unto us, "ordained by CHRIST himself, as a means whereby we receive "the same, and as a pledge to assure us thereof." In this Sacrament of the Lord's Supper the Bread and Wine are the outward signs, signifying that Body and Blood of CHRIST which is received into the heart by faith. The sign of the Bread signifies CHRIST's broken Body, the Wine his blood shed for our Sins; and the sign is mutual, for it represents also our dependence upon and esteem of him, whose Body and Blood under these signs we spiritually partake of.

The original meaning of the word *Sacrament* signifies the oath by which the *Roman* soldiers bound themselves to their general. Thus it is our oath of allegiance, wherein we swear fidelity to JESUS the Captain of our salvation; as they swore that they would never desert their colours in the day of battle, we also herein solemnly engage to maintain irreconcileable war against all the enemies of CHRIST without and within us, fighting manfully under his banner against sin, the world, and the devil, and this at the peril of our eternal damnation. So that whenever we presume to come to CHRIST's Table, without this war against sin maintained in our conversation, we become guilty of the body and blood of CHRIST; we incur the awful guilt of perjury; and "eat and drink our own damnation, not "discerning the LORD's Body."

This Sacrament hath in scripture several particular names, which are expressive of the nature and design of it.

1. The *Lord's Supper*. It is a spiritual repast for the soul, as meat is for the body; and as our Bodies are refreshed

by the Bread and Wine, so much more is the believing soul by the Body and Blood of CHRIST therein shewn forth. It is a chief banquet in the family of CHRIST, as supper was among the ancients; and therefore none of the children should be absent, unless upon very urgent occasions, lest they not only lose their food, but incur the displeasure of their Father for their neglect and irregularities. And it is emphatically stiled the *Lord's Supper*, forasmuch as it was instituted by him at supper time, the same night in which he was betrayed, and then a constant memorial of it commanded by him, and herein it is so highly distinguished from all common food, whether you consider the Master of the feast, the Lord of glory, or the spiritual nourishment contained under these consecrated elements.

2. It is called the *Communion* of the Blood of CHRIST. It represents the intercourse there is between CHRIST the head and the members of his body, called in the prayer after the communion, "the company of all faithful people." He communicates to them herein his favour and grace, his blood and righteousness; and they communicate their thanksgiving, acceptance, love, and gratitude. So that no persons can at all partake in it, till they have a living union with him, and are a part of his mystical body; for then only the nourishment and support can be communicated to them. All who are not thus united to CHRIST are as branches cut off and withered, and can receive no more benefit by coming to the Lord's Table than a dead body can from meat and drink. It is also a communion with the members themselves, as well as with their head JESUS CHRIST, *For we being many are but one body:* and we eat of the same bread and drink of the same cup, in token that we derive our life from one common fountain; that we are all actuated by the same Spirit, and have as near an interest in and affection for one another as the members of the same body have, *For we are the body of Christ, and members in particular.* What a strange absurdity then would it be for an uncharitable soul, for one who is not influenced by brotherly love, to approach CHRIST'S Table, who would be there only as a mortified limb cut off from all living communication with the rest, and full of putrefaction?

3. It is called the *New Testament* in CHRIST'S Blood. *Where a Testament is, there must of necessity,* saith St. PAUL, *be the death of the testator; for a testament or will is only in force after men are dead.* In the Sacrament this Testament is opened: the Blood of CHRIST, here emblematically poured out of his heart, shews it is valid by his death; and all the legacies therein contained are to be applied for, and paid down according to the purport of the will of the deceased; and it is sealed with blood, as, on the renovation of the old Covenant on *Sinai*, *Moses* sprinkled the blood of calves and goats with scarlet wool and hyssop on the book of the Law, signifying thereby the sealing of the Covenant; so here God condescends, by this continual sign, to seal to us visibly, for the assistance of our faith, all the blessings of the Covenant of Grace in CHRIST JESUS. Assuring us by such an ordinance of his own appointment, that this shall be, as the rainbow in the clouds, the sure sign to us that no deluge of wrath shall ever again sweep away those who come to him by JESUS CHRIST.

The design then of the Lord's Supper may be partly seen from these names, and is fully expressed in one of our answers in the Catechism; it was ordained "for the continual remem-"brance of the sacrifice of the death of CHRIST, and of the ben-"efits which we receive thereby." To both of which points I shall speak a little.

1. It was ordained "for the continual remembrance of the "sacrifice of the death of CHRIST." Here we are taught to look upon him as bleeding for us upon the accursed tree. Here the Lamb of GOD, as if he had been newly slain, is in the ordinance set forth as crucified among us. Here the broken Bread represents his mangled Body torn with scourgings and buffetings, pierced by the thorns, the nails, and the spear. Here we may see his agonies, remember his mockery, reproach, insults, and all the complicated miseries which made his sufferings the most afflictive that ever earth beheld; *Behold and see, all ye that pass by, was there any sorrow like unto his sorrow!* Here also we see his Blood gushing as from his side, when the soldier's spear entered his heart, and forthwith came

thereout blood and water. Thus his bitter death we are to remember; and that it was a sacrifice for our sins. As under the Law the sinner laid his hand upon the victim's head in token of transferring the guilt of all his sins upon him, so here we must especially remember that the transaction before us is sacrificial and vicarious. That CHRIST gave *himself an offering for sin, made himself a curse for us*, as it is written, *Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree;* so that we are to look upon him herein as "taking away sin by the sacrifice of "himself," and bearing the burden of your and my iniquities in particular. And in this sacrifice of the death of CHRIST many things are represented to us, as included in the transaction, and which we are called at the same time to remember. Such as,

1. The great love of CHRIST towards us sinners. Was ever love indeed like his? well may it be called *love which passeth knowledge*. Angels are lost in wonder whilst they look into the mystery of redeeming love; and how then should we, to whom this love is shewn, be astonished whilst we are called to partake of it? he died not for angels but for men; and when? was it when we were faithful, affectionate, and obedient, that we gained his heart to such an expensive manifestation of his love? no; when *we were enemies by wicked works*, when we were without strength or power to love or obey him, even then *in due time did Christ die for the ungodly:* in us there was nothing but misery, we were lost in sin, wilfully lost by our disobedience, without power or inclination to seek for any favour at GOD'S hands: and he wanted not our services, his glory would have been unsullied, if he had given us up to the fruit of our folly, and left us to our deserved ruin; neither can he receive any addition to his happiness by us, who is in in himself all-sufficient, and in his nature infinitely happy, exalted above all blessing and praise. But, freely moved by the mere benignity of his heart, and out of pure compassion to us, JESUS offered to stand in our stead; and since to save us he must be made man, his love stooped to every meanness of our condition, to the form of a servant, to the death of a slave. Love brought him down from the throne of glory, love clothed

him with a body like our own, love urged him on through all the painful steps of his afflicted life; the waters of trouble were never able to quench it, nor the floods of persecution to drown it. Love put the cup of trembling into his hand, love bid him drink the last drop of all its dregs; *For having loved his own, he loved them unto the end;* his love abode till he cried, *It is finished;* when having sealed with blood the sure and well ordered covenant, his soul was dismissed, and he went to begin his triumphs over death, hell, and the grave; and when he arose again love was his first expression, *Go to my brethren and say, I ascend to my Father and your Father.* Love carried him to the right hand of GOD, and there he is this moment shewing forth the unchangeableness of his affection by *ever living to make intercession for us*, and pleading before the throne the marks of love so deeply engraven in his hands and in his side. And when can we then be called so feelingly to remember this love as at an ordinance, where all its glory is made to pass before us?

2. We are here to call to mind the great evil of sin. Never was it seen in such glaring colours as when it was written in a Saviour's sweat, and tears, and blood. Here sin indeed appears exceeding sinful. Its horrid nature and deep malignity are seen throughout the whole transaction, beyond what all the miseries which ever attended it before could possibly lead us to conceive. The cries of infants, the pains of sickness, the groans of wretchedness, the agonies of the expiring, and all the awful horrors of death, serve in some measure to tell us what an evil and bitter thing sin is, which could have occasioned such dire effects, and yet one glance at the glass of the sufferings of JESUS, will reflect the horrid image of sin in colours infinitely darker and deeper. There we see it black indeed, when an incarnate GOD agonizes under its load, when horror and darkness filled his soul with intolerable anguish, and pain tortured his body till sweat as great drops of blood fell down to the ground. Was this for sin? yes, brethren, it was sin, which made JESUS *exceeding sorrowful even unto death;* it was sin made him *sore amazed and very heavy;* it was sin which ex-

torted from him that piercing cry, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Behold and tremble then, whilst you look upon this awful sight. Look in and let these sufferings cast a light upon your vile hearts, and learn to loathe and abhor yourselves and sin, whilst here you are taught to see its inexpressibly abominable nature.

3. Herein remember also the inexorable justice of GOD. Though love would pardon, yet must it be in a way wherein justice should be satisfied. Sin required an expiation equivalent to its high demerit, neither earth nor heaven afforded any such; *I looked, and there was none to help.* Justice demanded righteous judgment, such as had been poured upon rebel angels cast down into hell on their first transgression; the thunderbolt of wrath was lifted up to smite us sinners to the lowest pit; JESUS steps between and cries, *Stay them from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom;* receives the deadly shaft in his own body on the tree, and manifests the justice of GOD more gloriously than could have been done by the destruction of the whole human race. For who is this? this is JESUS, the Son of GOD, *the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person;* this is the Father's equal, the man *that is his fellow;* this is the eternal GOD, come to expiate his creatures' crimes. Satisfaction was demanded, he offers to pay, to over-pay every demand. The price agreed, the Judge executes his claim, *Awake, my sword,* he cries, *against the shepherd;* the sword awoke to smite to the uttermost, and take full vengeance for the sins of a fallen world. *It pleased the Lord to put him to grief; he laid upon him the iniquities of us all;* and what would have utterly crushed us into hell, bruises to death the only Son of GOD. Behold the severity of GOD, *He spared not his own Son;* see herein what a flaming sword Justice holds, and how it is honoured by such a sacrifice; see from hence what a fearful thing it is *to fall into the hands of the living God;* and in this ordinance learn to tremble whilst you see nothing but the Blood of GOD himself capable of expiating your guilt, and satisfying the demands of his own inexorable Law.

4. This sacrifice calls upon you to remember the conquest made by it. You, a child of wrath, an heir of hell, a slave of Satan, here see your liberty proclaimed, your tyrant destroyed, your misery done away. A dying JESUS on the accursed tree conquers for you; death, hell, and sin, fall before him. Strong in weakness, *he triumphed on the cross, spoiling the principalities and powers of darkness, and making a shew of them openly. By death he destroyed him that had the power of death; that is, the devil;* as a sweet singer of *Israel* expresses it;

"And when I bled, and groan'd, and dy'd,
"I ruin'd Satan's throne;
"High on my cross I hung, and spy'd
"The monster tumbling down."

Thus he hath vanquished all our enemies for us, hath bound Satan from hurting us, plucked out the sting of death, and sealed up the bottomless pit. His death is our life, his fall our victory, his cross our triumph: well then may we glory in it, and determine to know nothing else but JESUS, and him crucified, since hereby we become more than conquerors, and are enabled daily to tread down Satan under our feet. And in this ordinance, peculiarly designed to strengthen our souls, this glorious victory should never be forgotten, no less for the honour of JESUS, than the comfort to be derived from it to our own souls.

5. It should always remind us of his coming again. It is as the pledge of our friend put into our hands to remember him in his absence, and to assure us he intends us another visit. This is to be a continual remembrance *to shew forth the Lord's death till he come.* Though he is gone to heaven now, yet he hath promised us he will return and take his humble followers home with him; *I go,* says he, *to prepare a mansion for you.* When we see him present with us in the symbols of Bread and Wine, we should think how quickly we shall see the sign of the Son of man in the clouds; how soon we shall in our flesh see GOD, and with our eyes behold him, even that very body which the nails tore, and the spear pierced; shall see him, but now

brighter than the sun when it shineth in its strength, coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, accompanied by hosts of heaven which no man can number; *coming to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired of all that believe.* And this will be a remembrance most comforting to those who, by the present ordinance sealing to them all the promises of GOD, are assured that when *he shall appear, then shall they also appear with him in glory.*

Such are the views which are included under the remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of CHRIST, which leads,

2. To the consideration of the benefits we receive thereby. These are great and manifold. In general JESUS CHRIST makes over his whole self to every believer, and therewith all the blessings of grace and glory, which by his obedience unto death he hath purchased for us. GOD in giving us his Son, *doth also with him freely give us all things;* and of these the following are the most remarkable.

1. The pardon of sin. This is the first and grand purchase of the sacrifice of CHRIST; his blood was shed for the remission of sins. Sin made the great breach between GOD and us, its guilt condemned, whilst its power enslaved us; we lay under a curse which we could neither remove nor endure. But CHRIST, by his undertaking for us, hath opened to us a door of hope, a way *in which God is righteous and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,* whilst he accepts our surety, and exacts from him the immense debts with which we stood chargeable.

In the gospel the glad tidings of free salvation are brought to us, and we are called to embrace them; and here, for the confirmation of our faith, GOD condescends to put his seal to his Covenant of Grace, ratifying to us the purchased pardon, and assuring us thereby that he will *be merciful to our unrighteousness, and will remember our sins and iniquities no more;* and we testify our consent and hearty desire of its accomplish-

ment by coming to receive the free gift of GOD in JESUS CHRIST, and casting our souls upon the promise. How high the gift! how great the benefit! pardon of sin, a free pardon without money and without price; a pardon for the chief of sinners, for a world of sinners; though dearly purchased by CHRIST, freely given to us; a pardon that silences condemnation, removes fear, begets boldness. Doth the Law accuse? we point to this sacrifice and say, There is my satisfaction. Doth conscience tremble? looking to JESUS how can we fear! Are we weighed down with our guilt peculiarly heavy, bound as under an ephah of lead, or lying under a burden as the sand of the sea? this Blood cleanseth from all sin, unbinds every heavy burden, sets the prisoner free, sends him forth from the pit of sin and death to partake in the glorious liberty wherewith CHRIST hath made us free. Come then, ye guilty sinners, whose black crimes cover you with confusion; come, ye leprous souls, who want to wash and be clean; come, ye burdened consciences, and lay down your load at the foot of the cross of JESUS CHRIST. He hath purchased all you want, and invites you to come and take of the water of life freely; to wash your crimson sins away in the fountain of his blood; and to be restored to the full enjoyment of GOD's favour, just as if you had never sinned. Here is a pardon for you written in blood and sealed in blood, confirmed by the word and oath of GOD, that *by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to the hope set before us.*

2. Adoption of children is another benefit of CHRIST'S passion. We who were aliens from the commonwealth of *Israel*, and strangers to the promises, are brought nigh through the Blood of CHRIST, and made fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the houshold of GOD. His obedience to death not only removes guilt, but confers favour upon us. We are hereby reinstated in all the forfeited rights of children, which by our fall we had lost, and receive the adoption of sons, as well as are delivered from the curse of the Law. In this ordinance GOD the Father promises to be a father to all those who come unto him by

JESUS CHRIST; that he will give them a place in his family upon earth, and an inheritance among the joint-heirs with CHRIST in heaven. That he will take greater care of them than the most tender parent, and love them with an everlasting love. He gives them this pledge, as the father gave the prodigal son the ring, whereby they are sealed to the day of redemption; and withal sheds abroad in their hearts his love, begetting theirs: *because we are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.* Thus the children coming to their Father, at the Table where their elder Brother hath provided a feast of love for them, receive increase in every filial temper and disposition, and grow up into him in all things who is their head, even CHRIST. Here then behold the precious purchase of a Saviour's Blood; that we, the heirs of wrath and children of darkness, that we, dust of the earth, vile as men, abominable as sinners, that we, aliens and enemies in our minds by wicked works, should be brought nigh, not merely permitted, as the prodigal asked, to be put among the hired servants, but robed in the Saviour's righteousness, placed among his children, seated at his table, blessed with his favour, partakers of the provisions of his house below, and looking for *an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, which fadeth not away, reserved for us in heaven.* Well may we cry out with astonishment, *Behold, what manner of love is this which the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!*

3. Another benefit is the consolation and joy which are herein dispensed. To rejoice in CHRIST JESUS, to have peace with GOD through faith, to be filled with comfort and joy of the Holy Ghost, in the present earnest and sure prospects of glory to come, is in a peculiar measure the case in this ordinance, where all things visibly tend to beget confidence in GOD. Here we often get *Pisgah*-views of the promised land, here the mourning saint finds joy, the weary rest, the dejected encouragement, the strong increasing confidence; here the Spirit of faith applies the atonement, and the sense of reconciliation often fills our souls with joy unspeakable and full of glory; and

CHRIST intends his people should comfort themselves, should abound in all spiritual joy, and come as to a feast where gladness in sown for the upright in heart. Here we should dry our tears, at least if they fall they should be tears of joy, we should put on the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, and not sit mournfully before the LORD of hosts, nor cloud the joy of the festivity with sorrow on our brow, unless such a sorrow as St. *Paul* mentions, *As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.* Whilst though mourning for our sins we believe the greatness of the gift herein bestowed on us, and the Spirit witnesses with our spirit to the work he hath wrought in us, and gives us a present taste of our inheritance, before we are actually put in possession of the purchased glory in heaven.

What a delightful ordinance! how many thousands of real Christians have experienced the comforts of it, and daily continue to do so? Real Christians! I say, not mere ceremonial visitors, they feel, taste, and handle nothing of the Word of life; the Bread and Wine are to them barren elements, dry breasts which afford no consolation; but the soul vitally united to CHRIST can say, *I sat under his shadow with great delight. He brought me to his banquetting house, and his banner over me was love.* He tastes the joy therein dispensed, and goes away rejoicing because he hath seen the LORD.

4. In this ordinance also there is a free distribution according to every man's necessities of strength and power from JESUS CHRIST, for all the work a Christian is called to; it is one instituted means of conveying to believers the supplies of the Spirit for their wilderness state, both to subdue their corruptions and strengthen their graces. Here we draw water out of the wells of salvation, and like *Elijah* travelling to the mount of *Horeb*, receive from time to time our provision, in the refreshment of which we may hold on our way, and wax stronger and stronger till we come to the heavenly *Horeb*, the mount *Zion*, the *Jerusalem* which is above. If our corruptions are strong, here is grace to mortify them, here we are taught and do receive humility to supplant pride, heavenly-

mindedness instead of worldliness, and purity instead of pollution. The example before us, as well as the grace ministered, powerfully calls upon us to learn of him to be meek and lowly of heart; not to be of the world, even as he was not of the world; to walk in holiness, as he also walked. Are our graces all feeble and weak? where shall we blow the smoking flax into a flame if not here, where every thing conspires to confirm our faith, to enliven our hopes, to kindle our warmest affections, to enlarge our charity, to inspire our zeal, to teach us meekness, to quicken our langour, to encourage our perseverance, to excite our thankfulness, in short, to work in us every divine temper and disposition? This blessed ordinance is designed to strengthen us mightily in the inner man, to support us under all discouragements without and fears within, that we might go on from strength to strength, from grace to grace, till we come to the blessed place where we shall go from glory to glory.

Here then are great and glorious privileges obtained by the precious Blood of the Son of GOD, and we are called upon to come and partake in all of them; and what excuse can we make? Do not we want a pardon? is adoption a despicable blessing? is spiritual joy an insipid pleasure? or the gift of GOD's Spirit an unnecessary assistance? why then do so many slight the ordinance of the LORD, and neglect this great salvation? Do you disclaim any relation to JESUS CHRIST, and renounce his religion, that you decline making this profession, and have no desires after the benefits of his death and passion? surely they who never think of remembering the LORD's death till he come, will be most unprepared to meet him on a dying bed, or in a day of judgment. I beseech you to consider this, you that forget GOD, lest by your slighting of him he be provoked to give you up to your own inventions, and you die in your sins, neither sprinkled with his Blood, nor clothed with his Righteousness, nor partakers of his Spirit: be assured they who forget CHRIST now, will be disowned by him in the day of his appear- and glory.

CHAP. II.

An Invitation to the COMMUNION.

WHEN in the parable the table for the marriage feast was spread, the oxen and fatlings killed, the servants in waiting, the royal bridegroom seated, a message was sent to hasten the guests, *Come now, for all things are ready.* With this message, brethren, am I sent to every one of you, beseeching and intreating you for CHRIST'S sake, that ye would be reconciled to GOD, and as a token thereof to come unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb. But as their message of old was rejected, so too frequently is ours. The most of you agree with one consent to excuse yourselves, the farms and the merchandize, the cares and pleasures of this life so ingross your time, that you have neither inclination nor leisure to attend the call; and of those who do come, how many forget the wedding-garment, and thrust themselves in unwelcome guests, who after having eaten and drank in CHRIST'S presence, will be bound hand and foot and cast into outer darkness, where is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. To the one and the other of these I will address the following words before I enter upon the consideration of the temper necessary for the profitable partaking of the Lord's Supper. And here I intend to shew you,

I. The great danger of neglecting this ordinance.

II. The great guilt of coming to it unworthily.

I. The great danger of neglecting this ordinance. And this will appear,

1. If we consider it as the breach of the express commandment of JESUS CHRIST. It was among his last words the night before he was betrayed, that his disciples should *do this in remembrance of him.* The words of a friend are always dear, but his dying words especially are apt to dwell upon the mind;

and to neglect his last commands would be then a sure mark of having no friendship for him. Now this is evidently the case with those who wait not upon the LORD at his Table, to remember his death till he come. They confess that they have no friendship for him, by their disobedience to the things which he hath commanded them. They live in the allowed neglect of a positive precept, and thereby bring down upon themselves the reward of transgressors, who have despised his counsels. And that you may see this is no small offence, I wish you to observe the heavy wrath of GOD denounced against those who neglected to celebrate the Passover (to which our Communion answers, representing to us a deliverance from sin and hell, infinitely greater than that from *Egyptian* bondage) *That soul was to be cut off from his people. Now if they who despised Moses's law died without mercy, of how much sorer punishment suppose ye shall we be thought worthy, if we neglect so great salvation?* Careless sinners, who turn their backs on the LORD'S Table, think little of the guilt this adds to their state, and how severely every such neglected opportunity will be answered for, when this JESUS shall come to execute judgment on all the despisers of his name and ordinances.

2. The great danger of neglect herein is evident, in that by so doing we continue dead in trespasses and sins. *Except*, says CHRIST himself, *ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.* Now though this primarily refers to the reception of the gospel, and doth not exclude those from eternal life who having received the gospel are waiting upon GOD with a purpose of heart of soon devoting their souls to him in this solemn ordinance; it evidently excludes all those who have neither received CHRIST into their hearts by faith, nor desire to be partakers of the seals of his covenant; it is not possible for such to have any spiritual life in them; they are dead in trespasses and sins, and they declare hereby their abiding indisposition for, and disinclination to, all the exercises of a spiritual life. The soul whom CHRIST hath quickened delights to be

maintaining daily communion with him, to wait in his house and at his table, whenever he hath opportunity; but you have no such desires, no such disposition, because you have chosen death rather than life, and are daily pursuing a course, the end of which must be everlasting destruction. Ask yourself this plain question, Why do not I come to the Communion? and what can you answer, but that I am living in the pursuit of iniquities which I have no inclination to forsake; and what is this but a plain acknowledgment of the dreadful misery in which you are lying every day, liable to the wrath of GOD, and assuredly ready to receive it if you die as you live, without a new birth from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness.

3. The danger of neglecting the LORD's Table is evident, as it includes the renunciation of our covenant with GOD. There are but two sort of people in the world, Believers and Unbelievers; those who are within the covenant, and those who are out of it. When we were infants the charitable act done for us in Baptism, and the conditional engagement then entered into, can profit us nothing unless we are putting in our own claim to the blessings then promised, and by partaking in the other sacrament, when we are come to the years of discretion, declare we thankfully embrace the covenant of grace, and receive the signs and seals thereof in token both of our dependence upon CHRIST and renewed dedication to him; where this is not done, we deny in fact our baptismal engagements, break the covenant we have entered into, and declare our disavowal of all the promises then made for us. Hence we can claim nothing under it, and are left, though we may be professing members of CHRIST outwardly, *aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the promises; without* CHRIST, *without* GOD, without the covenant, and consequently *without hope*, without grace, and without heaven.

4. The great danger of neglecting it is evident from the great wrath and indignation GOD hath revealed against the despisers of his covenant. It is said in *Romans* i. 18. *That the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness*

and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. Here then you may read your own condemnation; who of you that is come to years of discretion doth not know the great duty lying upon you to remember the death of CHRIST? Do not you condemn others that live in neglect of the Lord's Supper, and what is this but condemning yourself? you have excuses I know, but I warn you there will none of them be taken in the day of judgment; and your own consciences will tell you so, if you will but give them time to speak. You know your breaking the commands of GOD is what nothing can excuse, and therefore you may be fully assured that the wrath of GOD lieth upon you. O that from each of these considerations I knew how to reach your hearts, with such an awful, with such a tender expostulation, as might at once alarm and constrain you; and what urgent cause have I to speak, whilst I see the dreadful neglect of many of you who never come, and of others who come so seldom, that the same condemnation lieth at their door. Are all such flagrant transgressors? are all such dead in trespasses and sins? are all such out of the church of GOD? are all such under the wrath of GOD? in what a fearful state then, brethren, are the most of you living? in what an ungrateful state, where you make CHRIST'S Blood to be shed in vain for you? have you no sensibility of the amazing love of JESUS, of him who lived, who bled, who groaned, who wept, who suffered, who died, for you? hath he undergone so many things for you in vain? and surely it is as yet in vain: for do not you slight all his mercies, despise his salvation, count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and do despite to the Spirit of grace, whilst you quench all his strivings? but if love will not move, at least let fear dismay you; consider what it is to be an outcast of heaven, to be a stranger to GOD'S covenant, to be an enemy to CHRIST, to be marked out for the divine vengeance, to be without a Saviour in the day of judgment, to be exposed to the storms of eternal wrath, to be banished from GOD'S presence, to be cast into hell, and have your portion with unbelievers; yet all this, fearful and tremendous as it is, lieth against your soul. Thou, even thou art the man. Not having Communion with CHRIST you are as a branch dried up and withered, which

men gather and cast into the fire and they are burned. I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of GOD to consider these awful truths, and begin to examine your souls, lest, with the thousands that have gone before you, you should perish after the same example of unbelief.

But I mean not herein that, with all your sins and carelessness about you, you should approach the sacred place where CHRIST spreads his Table. No. There is a serious inquiry necessary before you presume to *eat of that bread and drink of that cup*, which too many rashly and unadvisedly thrust themselves to partake of, who have no discernment of the Lord's Body. This therefore,

II. I address to you who come not, and all others who come with an undue disposition, that they consider the aggravated guilt of "eating and drinking their own damnation, not "discerning the Lord's Body." A fearful and a common case. *To discern the Lord's Body*, seems to be a phrase taken from the use of the senses in bodily objects; as the eye discerns a prospect, the palate discerns its food, and the hand discerns what it handles; such spiritual discernment must the soul have of JESUS CHRIST in this ordinance, it must see him by the eye of faith, it must verily and indeed receive him as actually to nourish the soul, as the Bread and Wine to strengthen and refresh the body; it must so *handle the word of life*, as to apply the Blood of CHRIST and his saving benefits. All which necessarily presupposes a new life, a living principle implanted in the soul, a resurrection from the death of sin, and a desire of growth in grace; concerning which I shall speak more particularly in the next chapter, only from hence it may be easily apprehended,

1. Who they are that, "not discerning the Lord's Body," eat and drink unworthily.

2. What is meant by "eating and drinking their own "damnation."

1. Who they are that do not discern the Lord's Body, and eat and drink unworthily. And here I beg your serious attention. The matter is deeply interesting to you. I suppose our eternal salvation is in nothing more nearly concerned, than in a right approach to the Lord's Table; and therefore the following persons cannot possibly have any call to appear there.

(1.) Such as are without the knowledge of CHRIST, the nature of his salvation, their own wants, or the benefits they are to expect. As our food does not profit us when we have no appetite or digestion, so where knowledge is wanting, the Sacrament is mere Bread and Wine, and can in no wise minister to the soul strength or refreshment. Indeed how is it possible they should remember CHRIST to any saving purpose, who are unacquainted with his nature as GOD and man in mysterious union; with his offices, as a Prophet to teach, a Priest to atone and intercede for, a King to protect and rule over and in, his people; and who have not so learned CHRIST out of the Scriptures as to know why he saves, or how he saves? Here ignorance is a total bar, it is the darkness which cannot comprehend him. And the case is the same where the nature of his salvation is mistaken; when any come to the Lord's Table without seeing the intire freedom of the salvation; when they bring their works and good life to make them accepted, instead of laying down their sins at the foot of his cross; when they lean either in whole or in part upon their own righteousness, instead of seeing him to be their alone righteousness before GOD; when they think the doing the duty is to save them, instead of renouncing that as well as every thing else, to plead only CHRIST'S merit before GOD, then spiritual discernment must needs be wanting. Again, when there is no knowledge of our own sinfulness, when we are ignorant of the miseries of our state by nature, and feel no burden under its present corruption; when we have no sense of the perverseness of our hearts, and the guiltiness of our lives; when we have never felt the desert of sin in the consciousness we have provoked GOD to cast us into hell; what should such do at a table where a Saviour only stands for sinners sakes? Or in fine, If there be no

knowledge nor expectation of the benefits procured by CHRIST, no desire of pardon, adoption, grace, or consolation, it is impossible we should have spiritual discernment, which consists in the apprehension and application of these to the soul. How stands your knowledge then? what know you of CHRIST? what of his salvation? what of your sins? what of the benefits you are to expect? are these dark and unknown? is your understanding blind and ignorant? then you are certainly unfit to come to his table, and are, in the nature of things, excluded from all the blessings of the Communion, for the Sacraments do not of themselves work necessarily, but only according to our discernment, according to the exercise of our spiritual senses.

(2.) Those are evidently excluded from the Lord's Table who live in any known sin, or the allowed and habitual neglect of any known duty. It were a horrid insult on the blessed JESUS, to come with a conscience still defiled, and with hands still unwashen from our iniquities, to touch his sacred sacramental Body; and therefore all who live in the open breach of his commandments should be utterly cast out. And it were much to be wished the ancient discipline were restored, and all scandalous sinners cut off visibly as they are spiritually from the Communion of CHRIST. Our church addresses, in her exortation, a most solemn admonition by name to all such; "Therefore if any of you be a blasphemer of GOD, (profane in "any measure in your conversation) an hinderer or slanderer of "his word, an adulterer, or be in malice, envy, or any other "grievous crime, (such as drunkenness, or sabbath-breaking, and "the like) repent, or come not, lest the devil enter into you, as "he did into *Judas*, and fill you full of all iniquities." A wise admonition indeed! for *what communion hath light with darkness, or Christ with Belial?* And how can it ever be supposed that GOD would have respect to any offering, when he sees our hearts going a whoring from him after the abominable thing which he hates? If you can see in your soul that there is one allowed sin, which you are unwilling to part with, and for which your conscience condemns you, be assured that GOD is greater than your heart, and must much more condemn you. Whilst this is

kept back you can have no part nor lot in the matter. The mists of sin will hinder you from discerning CHRIST, and your very appearance among his people will be but profane mockery. And yet how many dare come, whose conversations testify against them that they are yet unwashen from their iniquities? How many, who live habitually in pride and passion, pretend to drink into a meek and humble JESUS? How many whose superficial inquiries into their hearts shew, they are afraid to go deeply to work? How many in the interval of the seasons let loose the reins to worldliness and gratification? and some I have heard of, horrid to think it! who suppose the mere act of communicating is the cancelling of the past offences, and a license to sin again. Surely such must be *in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity.* The cup of blessing is to them a cup of trembling, and the bread of life a savour of death unto death. And the like may be said of those who live in the neglect of any known duty, such as private prayer, prayer in their families, reading the scriptures, mutual exhortation, and all other helps appointed for our increase in grace; to neglect these, except once a month, or once a quarter, for a dull week it may be, by way of formal preparation for the Sacrament, whilst all the interval hath been spent in forgetfulness of GOD and disregard of his service, or in some course of vanity, care, or indulgence; this I say is a direct proof of unsuitableness for the ordinance, such an one can never discern the Lord's Body.

(3.) They are excluded from any spiritual partaking of the Lord's Supper, who come merely to qualify themselves for an office. The impiety and profaneness of which is indeed past the power of words to express. What? can worms of the earth dare trifle with the Blood of the Son of GOD! and, merely to serve their own secular concerns, pollute the altar of the Lord? Can any thing be so horridly insolent as to come evidently with this thought; "Lord, I am not come here with any view to "thy glory; I am not come here as an undone sinner, penitent "and believing, to receive the pardon of my sins; I am not "come to remember thy death, nor expecting any benefits "from it; or at least these are not my chief aim, I am come

"only to qualify myself for an office, a mere temporal busi-"ness, and were it not for this I should gladly stay away." What a language this! What spots are these at our feasts? What a hardness and stupidity of conscience is such communicating disposed to beget? This is making the Blood of the Covenant common indeed. I tremble for the consequences. Knowing very well that, though we may be deceived, GOD will not be mocked. To have eaten and drank in his presence thus, will doubtless send us away at the last day with a *Depart from me, I never knew you.* And they who now thus drink of the cup of the Lord, will be found among those who shall then *drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation.*

(4.) They partake unworthily who only come at particular seasons, and instead of having an habitual fitness make all the work of the Communion to consist in a week's preparation. As if the Lord's Supper was a mere slavish duty, and a week's cleansing was all that is necessary to approach it. These mistake the very nature of the ordinance, and put their one week's preparation instead of all those tempers and dispositions which are required to be abidingly in the soul. For it is not cleansing the outside of the cup and platter, it is not the abstaining from gross sin, it is not saying so many prayers extraordinary, or not going into company, or being strictly regular for one week, that can shew us to be faithful people. This is the strangest farce of devotion that can be conceived, and can neither be pleasing in the eyes of an heart-searching GOD, nor at all answer the end designed of preparing us for a suitable approach to the Lord's Table. The work to be done is heart-work, not of the lip and knee; and the preparation is the inward trimming of our graces, not the outward form of a round of extraordinary duties. None are meet to approach the Lord's Table who are not every day maintaining spiritual communion with CHRIST, and always ready for his Table whenever a call invites them thither. There must be a daily sacramental vowing fidelity to him, and an exercise of faith in his death and the benefits of it, wherever CHRIST hath real communion

with the soul. Hence you may see the absurdity of putting on religion, only as our best clothes, once a month or a quarter. And that such persons as these, instead of being the friends of CHRIST, are no better than ceremonious visitors, whose room would be more welcome than their company. CHRIST, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, and who searcheth the heart and the reins, sees nothing but spiritual ignorance under the mask of devotion, and no inward sense exercised to discern him, consequently not the least meetness for an approach to his Table; needs must he address such with, *How camest thou in hither?*

5. To conclude: None can partake profitably who have not found acceptance with GOD through the righteousness of the Saviour, and in consequence experience the mighty power of his grace on their souls. By the mighty power of his grace I mean that virtue derived from CHRIST, whereby a dead sinner is quickened to spiritual life, and endued with spiritual sensibility. If in this ordinance the exercise of repentance, faith, charity, thankfulness, humility, and of all the other graces is necessarily required, in order to a discerning the Lord's Body, then it is evident that they who are without these never can partake spiritually. Now we are all destitute of these till the Spirit of GOD, making the gospel of JESUS effectual to us, enlightens our minds to see the fulness which is in CHRIST, and inspires these holy dispositions into our souls. We cannot repent and believe, and love and be thankful, or humble, when we will, or by our own power, in our natural state; we might as soon think of plucking the sun from the firmament, as of exercising one of these graces. They are all the work of GOD, the parts of the divine nature communicated to the children who are begotten, *not after the will of the flesh, nor of man, but of God.* Therefore if you do not know any such change wrought in you, any such new creation, any mighty working like unto that which raised up JESUS from the dead; if you have not an experimental sense of the quickning influence of the Spirit of GOD upon your soul, and have not begun to see that you have passed from death unto life, from darkness unto light, from the power of

Satan unto GOD, it is plain you cannot possibly partake discerningly in this ordinance. Should you give ever so much meat and drink to a dead man, it would neither bring him to life nor nourish the carcase. The case is the same, if there be no spiritual life in the soul, there can be no strengthening and refreshing by the Body and Blood of CHRIST.

2. THESE persons therefore one and another must needs be excluded from all the saving benefits of CHRIST's death and passion; and if thus careless, ignorant, sinful, and unconverted, they approach the Lord's Table, they must needs eat and drink their own damnation. A fearful word indeed! enough to make the ears of every one that heareth it to tingle; and which our church well explains thus, "We kindle GOD's wrath a-"gainst us, we provoke him to plague us with divers diseases, "and sundry kinds of death. Judge therefore yourselves, breth-"ren, that ye be not judged of the Lord." Here you see that present judgments, and the wrath to come, are the wages of such as, by a rash, unadvised, and unsuitable approach to the Lord's Table, are guilty of the Body and Blood of CHRIST our Saviour. And shall we provoke GOD's wrath against us? are we stronger than he? forgive my tender concern for you, I am not speaking these things to grieve or disturb you, but as beloved children I warn you. You must be freely dealt with; you will not forgive me else at the day of judgment, if I should now be unfaithful to your souls. I press, I invite you, yea I command you in the name of JESUS CHRIST, not to slight his Table as you do. But then judge yourselves whether ye are in the faith, for if ye are amongst those I have described, you cannot be welcome guests, if you live in ignorance or sin, if you respect merely a temporal convenience, if you make it a matter of form, and have not a living principle of grace in your souls, abstain at present, as you would not imbrue your hands in CHRIST's Blood, and crucify him afresh. Yet abstain not altogether. As you value your everlasting salvation do not lie down in this state, but hear the present call of JESUS, look to his sacrifice that still bleeds for you, call upon him whilst yet he is near to prepare your heart according to the preparation of the

sanctuary. Let your past forgetfulness, neglect and dishonour of him, lie deep upon your minds, and be among those things which especially humble you before him. And then arise, as perishing sinners, to lay yourselves at the foot of his cross, to look to him whom you have pierced, till faith in his Blood produces love in your souls towards him, and a willing heart leads you to his Table, to present yourselves a living sacrifice unto him. Then shall the ordinance be as much to his glory as your comfort, and you shall find by blessed experience that you do not only come, but are welcome.

CHAP. III.

Self-Examination a necessary Duty before we come to the LORD'S SUPPER.

AS the profiting in the blessed ordinance of the Lord's Supper depends chiefly upon the disposition of mind in which we approach it, it will become all, as St. *Paul* advises, who would come with spiritual discernment, and return with a blessing, seriously to examine themselves before they presume *to eat of that bread and drink of that cup.* To comfort the afflicted, encourage the doubting, and to help the sincere in this behalf, will be the design of the present chapter, as well as to quicken every soul to the too-neglected work of communing with his own heart. Our Church Catechism will supply us with the four principal and essential points of inquiry, which if we understand thoroughly, and answer faithfully, we may come to the knowledge of our state respecting GOD, and consequently our fitness or unfitness for the Lord's Supper.

And these are,

I. Whether we "repent truly of our former sins, stedfastly purposing to lead a new life."

II. Whether we "have a lively faith in GOD'S mercy through CHRIST."

III. Whether we "have a thankful remembrance of his "death.

IV. Whether we "are in charity with all men."

Points, each of which deserve a larger treatment than this short exercise, and yet you may come to some safe determination about them, if you will attend to what is now to be set before you.

I. Then, to examine whether you "repent truly of your "former sins, stedfastly purposing to lead a new life," you must understand what is meant by evangelical repentance and newness of life. I shall describe them as including,

1. A Sorrow for Sin.
2. Hatred of Sin.
3. Forsaking of Sin.
4. An evident change wrought upon your heart and life.

1. Evangelical repentance includes sorrow for Sin. *They who sow in tears shall reap in joy.* And when have we so much cause to be exercising sorrow for our sins, and to mourn, as when we are coming to *look upon him whom we have pierced?* here the foundation of repentance must be laid, we must lay to heart the great dishonour we have done to GOD by our sins, how many and great they have been, how vile our nature and hearts are, as well as how perverse our ways have been. We must reflect upon the ingratitude of sin, and how every act, every thought of it, has added a pang to the SAVIOUR'S agony. We must consider it as the grieving of the SPIRIT, the defilement of his temple our bodies, and the abominable thing which he hateth. We should reflect on the wages of sin, even death eternal, and that of but one sin; how deeply then are we in arrear to the divine justice, when heart and life have been nothing but sin? Thus its evil nature and heavy guilt should both conspire to beget in us the deepest sorrow and remorse that ever we should dare transgress against the Majes-

ty of Heaven, and the Father of Mercy; that ever we should be ungrateful to a dying JESUS; that ever we should provoke the patient SPIRIT; that ever we should madly trifle with our souls, and plunge them into such awful condemnation. But have such thoughts ever been harboured in your hearts? are you now desiring to mourn for your iniquities, and do they, in these views, dwell upon your heart as a sore burden too heavy for you to bear? are you sore smitten on the grievous remembrance, and ready, like the Prophet, to wish for a head of waters, and eyes like a fountain of tears, to run down day and night for iniquities which a sea of your own tears would never wash away? Do you know any such sorrow, and is the grief for your sins the bitterest cup you have ever drank of? This is a gracious disposition, for true *godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation never to be repented of.*

2. Repentance implies an abhorrence of sin and ourselves. *Behold*, says Job, *I am vile, therefore I repent, and abhor myself in dust and ashes.* It is impossible, where a true sense of sin is upon the heart, this should be wanting; the heart then rises up with indignation, with revenge against itself, as St. *Paul* expresses it, and cannot bear the view of the past without self-loathing. To think how vilely we have acted, how insolently we have returned all God's kindness with abuse, how we have turned all his blessings into a curse, how we have slighted the love of CHRIST, how we have resisted the HOLY GHOST, in his word, in his providences, in all the methods of grace he hath used with us, in short, how we have sold ourselves as it were to work wickedness; and now to think of returning to the bosom of our God thus polluted and defiled, what vile wretches must we be in our own eyes? and to see ourselves such, is absolutely necessary before we can return. *Then*, saith the Lord, *they shall return, and remember their own evil ways, and their doings which were not good, and shall loathe themselves for all their iniquities, and for all their abominations.* Are you conscious of any such self-abhorrence? can you adopt the language of *Job's* self-loathing, and in the view of your sins find the inward risings of disgust and displeasure against your-

self and them? do you appear in your own eyes a monster of ingratitude, and feel your heart detesting sin which hath made you so, more than you detest the vilest objects in nature? at least is it your desire to hate it more than you do? This is the work of true repentance.

3. Repentance implies a forsaking of sin. We cannot indeed but forsake it if we have groaned under its burden, and felt its odious ingratitude. How shall we think of continuing a moment longer in a state so displeasing to GOD, so grievous to ourselves? Here the sword of the SPIRIT is lifted up against every darling idol. Repenting we renounce our covenant with sin, and our allegiance to Satan, and burst his bands and break his cords off from us. No known sin can be any longer habitually indulged; not only the outward sins, whose open nature was more flagrantly rebellious, such as profaneness, passion, lewdness, drunkenness, lying, sabbath-breaking, covetousness, and the like; but the more secret heart-sins will be renounced, vain thoughts and vile affections, as well as actions, must be forsaken; no little sins any longer plead the privilege of custom or necessity. If we are sincere in our repentance, without pitying or sparing, our eye will search every corner of our heart, and wherever we find the traitor we shall bring him forth and slay him before the LORD; and our darling sin will meet with the severest treatment; *that* we shall lay most violent hands upon, whilst repentance cries, *Down with it, down with it even to the ground;* a right eye, a right hand, right any thing, however near and dear unto us, away it goes. Repentance makes thorough work. It is not a partial reformation, this is in many where true repentance hath never wrought its effectual work; and thousands have been undone by the mistake, whilst conscience hath made them part from some sins, and be more restrained and decent than before, but they have still dealt deceitfully with the LORD, their hearts have not been whole with him, and so they have gone no farther than *Ahab's* humiliation, or *Herod's* doing many things at *John's* preaching to him repentance; of whom the one still continued idolatrous, and the other kept his brother *Philip's* wife. A person may be

very nigh the kingdom of GOD, and yet never enter it; be *almost*, without being *altogether*, a Christian; look therefore to your hearts herein, there is no deceiving GOD: and what a crying sin would it be to come to CHRIST'S Table without a purpose of forsaking whatever is displeasing to him? Do you repent? is it evident from your conduct? Doth not your heart condemn you for any reserve made? Can you appeal to GOD for your sincerity, that you desire to indulge yourself in nothing you know or suspect to be sinful? Particularly, Do you heartily resist and seek to mortify the sin which most easily besets you? And is your repentance for it proved to be real from this, that your sorrow for it is not only your heaviest grief, but that your heart is set most steadily against it, and follows it close, desiring to destroy it root and branch; lest it should make you false to your vows, and like the worm at *Jonah's* gourd make your fair blossoms of repentance wither, and bring forth no fruit? This will be comfortable, if in the presence of GOD you can claim the proof of such a sincere universal renunciation of sin. It will be then indeed a *repentance never to be repented of.*

4. Repentance implies a change of mind; this is the exact meaning of the *Greek* word μετάνοια: for every real penitent is brought out of a state of nature into a state of grace; and all his aims, apprehensions, views, and principles of action, are as different as you can suppose those of any two different persons ever to have been, so that he is well said in scripture to *be born again; old things are passed away, and all things are become new;* he *is brought out of darkness into marvellous light;* he *walks not after the fashion of the world, but after Christ;* he looks not as before to the things *that are seen and are temporal, but to the things that are not seen and are eternal;* in short, he is changed into another man, a *new man created after Christ Jesus in righteousness and true holiness.* Here then is a wide field for inquiry, and most essential to our profitable partaking at the Lord's Table, since none but those who have begun to lead a new life can receive any benefit from attending on the ordinance. You must therefore herein closely examine yourselves. What do you know of this in-

ward change?....Is your *Understanding changed? whereas you were blind, do you now see?* you were *once darkness, are you now light in the Lord?* Have you a sight of yourself, of GOD, of CHRIST, of all the things of the SPIRIT, different from what you had before, so that your judgment is altered? Do you now discover the misery of your state and nature, the vanity of earth and time, the bondage of corruption, the great need of salvation, the unspeakable patience of GOD, the amazing love of CHRIST, the greatness of the invisible realities, and the importance of only making one thing needful, even the securing an interest in the kingdom of GOD and his righteousness?....Is your *Will* also altered in its choice? Have you begun to choose CHRIST for a portion, instead of the world? Do you prefer his service to the service of sin? and instead of the pursuits of this world, the pleasures of sense, and the vanities of time, rejecting these, are you embracing the ways of peace and the paths of holiness, which lead through faith to glory?....And are your *Affections* changed? Do you love what you hated, and hate what you loved? Is CHRIST now the object of your affection, more than ever your favourite sin hath been? At least is it your desire and prayer that he may be so? Is it your *delight* to be found engaged in the exercises of devotion? or do you chide your sluggish heart when it goes heavily to the blessed work? Are you become more afraid of offending GOD than the whole world beside? And are your *hopes* chiefly fixed on the promises of his word, and the expectations he bids you look to in eternity, instead of this present evil world? Is it your *joy* to see his interest flourish in the world? and is it a more sincere satisfaction to you to help to turn one sinner from the evil of his ways, than to partake in the greatest worldly advantages? In short, is it now become in a measure your meat and drink to do the will of GOD, and is that which you before loathed, namely, the denial of your own vile heart, and the keeping GOD's commandments, now become the constant desire of your soul, and the thing that you long for? And doth your whole conversation witness to this change, and prove that you are indeed passed from death unto life? that you walk no more as other unconverted men, in *the vanity of their minds, alienated from the life of God*

through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart, but as a child of light reprove the works of darkness, and testify against the world that its deeds are evil? and do you purpose to hold on thus doing, walking daily more circumspectly, redeeming the time, and stedfastly pursuing this course of newness of life which GOD's holy word prescribes to you, whatever difficulties may befal you, and whatever more than you yet see may be your portion, whether of reproach, loss, or persecution for your fidelity in CHRIST's service? This is that evangelical repentance you are called to. This must be the matter of your examination. If you can see no such change, if you are as you ever used to be, and never knew any time in your life when you were convinced by the SPIRIT of sin, led to him who giveth repentance, converted unto GOD and born again, (a change in its effects as evident and clear as to rise from the dead, or between a dry tree and one full of leaves, blossoms, and fruit) then I say you have not yet this newness of life, you are still in a natural state, and ought not to think of approaching the Lord's Table till matters are altered with you, and till the great change is begun, and is manifesting itself in your heart and life.

II. You must examine yourself whether you have "a live-"ly faith in GOD's mercies through CHRIST." Observe, a *lively* faith, not a *dead* faith, not a mere speculative assent of the head to the truth of religion, but a quickening powerful principle in the heart, a faith energetic, that worketh in us mightily. And this lively faith shews itself in the following ways.

1. In directing us to CHRIST as our alone propitiation. It brings us, burdened as we are with our sins, to the foot of the cross, and there bidding us lay them down, points to the Blood shed for us, and pleads that propitiation with which GOD is well pleased. In this way, and this only, we must look for salvation before GOD; renouncing our own righteousness, emptied of all self-sufficiency, confessing our guilt, and only resting on him who is our atonement and our righteousness before GOD. Into CHRIST's hands, as our advocate, we commit our cause, that

he may plead it effectually before the throne of God; and this with such satisfiedness in the availableness of his intercession, as gives us confidence towards GOD, and such a persuasion of CHRIST'S love, as that we can cheerfully and contentedly leave our salvation in his hands, assured that he is more willing to help us than we to desire it; yea, that he was pleading with his Father for us before we began to look to him. This is the lively faith which embraces the promises afar off, and enables us to say, *In the Lord have I righteousness*, through his Blood have I the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of GOD'S grace. The strength and confidence of our faith may be different in degree, but in all CHRIST'S people it must be the same in nature. Some poor mourning soul, discouraged with doubts, though deeply renouncing all hope in himself, can only feebly cast his soul upon promises which he holds as it were with a trembling hand; yet this is that good hope through grace, which, though far removed from the full assurance of faith, is the sound evidence of a believing soul, and exercise and experience will confirm it. Others can, by the SPIRIT, with humble confidence claim the salvation, rest satisfied in the sure and certain covenant, and rejoice in that *perfect love which casteth out fear*, persuaded that CHRIST hath *loved them, and given himself for them.* Inquire then, Do you possess any measure of this temper? Have you a lively faith? Do you come with the empty hand and a beggar's heart to receive a free salvation; renouncing your own righteousness, and disclaiming your duties as heartily as your sins in the matter of acceptance with GOD? Do you see enough in CHRIST to convince you he is able to save such a sinner as you, vile and sinful as you are? That *his Blood cleanseth from all sin*, and that his righteousness imputed to you will make you pleasing in the eyes of the GOD of purity? And are you satisfied in his willingness to save you, from all the free declarations he hath made, and all the mighty and gracious instances of that willingness and ability he hath given you? Do these (his power and willingness to save) beget in your mind a determined affiance in him, so that you can say, *Here shall be my rest for ever; this is all my salvation and all my desire;* then you have the discerning eye that sees CHRIST at his Table, the

discerning taste that feeds upon him, the discerning ear that hears his voice, the discerning hand that receives out of his fulness, that wraps the robe of righteousness around you, and makes you complete in him.

2. A lively faith lays hold of the strength of CHRIST, as well as his atonement and righteousness. Unable to do any thing of himself, the Believer, coming to him, can *do all things through Christ strengthening him.* Faith brings us to him as the repairer of the breach, as the healer of the deadly wound which sin hath given us, and which made us insufficient to think or do any thing pleasing to GOD. A lively faith seeks grace as well as pardon, and assures us it is to be had in CHRIST. It tells us, that though without him we can do nothing, yet in him when we are weak we shall be made strong, *strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might;* hence in the Communion the Believer applies to him, and rests all the wants and necessities of his soul upon JESUS the Saviour. To enter into the covenant, to abide in it, faith takes the grace of CHRIST, makes him the surety to undertake for us; while we despair of our own power and might, and draw from him all our sufficiency. And satisfied that his power and might shall be exercised for us, we rejoice in this confidence, that mighty as our enemies are, and weak and helpless as we are, yet that we shall be *more than conquerors through him that hath loved us.* Are you going to CHRIST with such application for strength, and from him do you find strength communicated to you? Do you see that without this grace you can do nothing? Do you sincerly renounce all hope in yourself, and make him your rock, his everlasting arms your support, his grace the ground of all your confidence? This is to believe; "to have a lively sense of GOD's mercy "in CHRIST;" for hereby this mercy comes home to our souls, we live upon it and by it; faith in CHRIST enabling us continually to apprehend it, so as to bring peace and pardon, and from it to derive strength and power against sin.

III. We must inquire into our thankfulness in "the remembrance of CHRIST's death," and the great and precious privileges purchased by his blood-shedding for us. If we are

really sensible of our fallen state, and have faith in the transaction here represented to us, it is not possible but our hearts should indeed be filled with gratitude and thankfulness to him who hath thus *loved us, and given himself for us.* And in proportion as we gain a clearer understanding of our own misery, and the condescension and love of JESUS CHRIST, our hearts will be more affected, and we shall come overflowing with praises to him who hath died for us, and rose again. This thankfulness hath a thousand different points of view from whence it takes occasion to admire and adore the grace of the REDEEMER. Its most lively exercise arises from himself, and next to that from all the blessings given in and with him. We are filled with thankfulness that we have ever heard the sound of his name in our ears, or tasted the power of his grace in our hearts; that we have been made already partakers of so many blessings, and have so many greater ones in store; that not only the end is so great and glorious, but that in the way we have so many delightful seasons of refreshment, where we may find rest unto our souls. CHRIST living, dying, rising, ascending, sitting at the right hand of GOD, each of these affords new matter for thankfulness. This must be expressed by our lips, in hearty humble acknowledgments of his love and kindness towards us; and not by our lips only "but in our lives, by "giving up ourselves to his service, and by walking before him "in holiness and righteousness all our days." Have you any experience of such thankfulness in your heart? Do not you see when any person does you a great and unexpected favour in any temporal things, how your heart rises towards them, and labours for expressions to testify the gratitude you feel? And how careful you are to please so generous a benefactor, if he is making you daily to partake of his bounty and munificence? Now if these trifles so affect you, and to be ungrateful and unthankful to man is looked upon as brutish and savage, how shou'd these great things, that in CHRIST are given you, dwell upon your hearts? How should you be impressed and influenced by them? Are you so? Is your heart rising up in the remembrance of that greatest of all gifts, GOD's own SON, with thanks, too big for utterance? Are you praising him with joyful

lips? or mourning at least over the coldness of your heart that loves and praises him no more? Doth your life testify the gratitude of your heart, by your carefulness to conform to his will and pleasure; never to offend him, or grieving if you do; in every thing desiring to shew yourself no longer as your own, but his who hath purchased you at so dear a price as his own blood, and called you to shew forth his praise by yielding yourselves to him as alive from the dead, and your *members instruments of righteousness unto holiness?* at least is this your daily study, desire, and prayer, that you may be enabled more and more to serve and please him? This is to be thankful, this is the proof that we have not received the grace of GOD in vain.

IV. We must examine whether, "we are in charity with "all men." The religion of JESUS CHRIST is a religion of universal love; and especially it is needful that when we come to remember him who died for his enemies, we should partake in the like temper of charity. And herein you should examine yourselves,

First, Negatively. You must not entertain any hatred or malice against any of your brethren. The hands that are to be lifted up, and the hearts to be brought to CHRIST'S Table, must be *without* malicious *wrath*, as well as *doubting*. If therefore any soul of you is living in anger, implacable and unmerciful, proud and resentful, unwilling to ask forgiveness or hard to grant it; if there be one person breathing whose offences you do not from your heart give up all desire and thoughts of revenging; if you are not ready on the first evidence of repentance to forgive; and if you do not compassionate their perverseness, where you may not be permitted farther to shew the exercise of love; you may be assured you can have no portion nor lot in the matter; your temper utterly excludes you; it can never be a feast of love to a revengeful spirit: and though you may pretend forgiveness, or seem reconciled, yet if the venom of malice rankle in your heart, and you want there the true spirit of charity, you are but as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal; you cannot eat of the LORD'S body, nor have Commu-

nion at his feast, nor partake of his benefits. Not that this merely is sufficient. I only mention it to shew the glaring impiety of many who dare come with hearts full of uncharitableness, that probably the week before have been venting their undue anger, resentment, and wrath, against those who have offended them, and have not mourned over and carried these hateful tempers to JESUS to subdue them. What a horrid profanation for such to pretend to a communion of saints, or to belong to that body where every part hath the most tender care for its fellow members! These surely are under wrath. They must repent and have their hearts changed, or wrath will shortly come upon them to the uttermost.

Secondly, Positively. We must be found in the exercise of charity; that is, we must have a tender feeling for the bodies and souls of men, whether Believers or Unbelievers, and this expressed in all proper acts of kindness and love towards them according to their several states.

1. To Unbelievers, those that are not in a state of reconciliation with GOD; who, though they may be professors in the church, evidence in their lives the unrenewed state of their hearts; these we must pity and pray for, must never be provoked to hatred with their wickedness, must bear with their opposition, abuse, or reviling, must labour to return them good for evil, and blessing for cursing; must be ready to shew our affection by helping their bodies in any time of want, and readily ministering to their necessities out of our abundance; and especially desiring to help their souls, to seize any convenient occasion of conversing with them on their state, to apprize them of their danger, to improve any impressions which GOD's grace or providence may have made; and labour in every way to pluck such brands from the burning, whether by undeceiving them if they rest on a form of godliness, or warning them if careless and utterly negligent. Are you shewing forth any such exercise of love? Have you ever thus tenderly rebuked sin upon your brother? Have you pitied the misery of sinners? Have you borne with meekness and long-suffering their provocations?

Are you gentle towards all men, not easily provoked? ready to pass by a transgression? and never avenging yourself by withholding assistance from your greatest enemy in his necessities? are you ready to every good word and work for him, heaping coals of fire upon his head to melt him down, if possible, to a sense of his ingratitude? or whatever reluctance to it you find in your remaining corrupt nature, is it your burden, and resolutely opposed? Can you pray affectionately for your bitterest enemy, and long for his conversion, that GOD may pardon him as you are willing to do? This is a small, very small part of the exercise of this extensive grace, but I fear enough to condemn us who are ready to kindle at every affront, to be impatient under provocation, to want compassion, to be destitute of those bowels of mercies which were in JESUS CHRIST, to forget how much GOD for CHRIST'S sake hath forgiven us. Yet to this we must seek to come, after this we must press, or we can never come to CHRIST'S Table acceptably, for he cannot bear to be approached by any heart where love unfeigned hath not wrought this powerful work.

2. We must shew our love especially to Believers. To those who are of the same body, whose conversation testifies the truth of the grace which is in them; over these we must delight, with these especially associate, at CHRIST'S Table or elsewhere; their bodies must be dear to us: whilst we do good to all, we must particularly regard the household of faith. But their souls especially we must watch for, mutually jealous over and caring for each other, bearing with each other's infirmities, desiring each other's growth in grace, contributing to it by conversation, by example, by prayer, and every other means in our power; exhorting and admonishing one another, praying for and with each other, as brethren of the same family, as children of the same Father, as partakers of the same table, as hoping for the same inheritance; we must love as brethren. A love which hath been declared by many to be equal, I might say to exceed that which nature implants in the dearest relations of life. The true Believer can say, as JESUS CHRIST did of those who told him of his mother and his brethren, *He that heareth*

Christ's word and doeth it, the same is my brother, my sister, and mother. Have you such affection towards the children of GOD? Do you delight in those who love GOD, and keep his commandments? Are you seeking to approve yourself in every labour of love toward them, and receiving with thankfulness their labours of love towards you? Have you the same regard for their welfare, that your body hath for the several members of it? and do you feel for them and with them in their trials, and alleviate their burdens by partaking of them? I have not space to enlarge the inquiry, but these may serve as short hints for your instruction, from whence you may draw a conclusion concerning your state and temper, how far you are really found in the exercise of these dispositions.

BLESSED are they who have obtained any measure of these graces, blessed are they who are seeking after them. The sincere desire after an increase of grace is true grace, and shall have a growing accomplishment. "Judge therefore your-"selves, brethren, that ye be not judged of the LORD; repent "you truly for your sins past; have a lively and stedfast faith "in CHRIST our Saviour; be thankful; amend your lives, and "be in perfect charity with all men;" and this not superficially, but from the heart, in simplicity and godly sincerity, and "so "shall ye be meet partakers of those holy mysteries."

CHAP. IV.

Considerations proper at the Time of the Celebration of the LORD'S SUPPER.

HAVING in the last chapter set before you what was necessary to be examined into, in order to come to a right judgment of our state, and to approach with suitable dispositions the Table of our Lord, I come now particularly to enter into the consideration of that frame of spirit which we should be in at the solemnity itself. Having the general requisites for

the feast, there is also required a particular exercise of these graces, like trimming our lamps to go forth to meet the bridegroom. For this end, when we are purposing to renew our approach to the Lord's Table, it will be useful at some season of leisure to inquire particularly how we stand, what progress we make in each of the aforementioned tempers, and that we spend some time in meditation and prayer with a view to the ordinance. Not that I mean to tie down any believer to a regular form which he may not omit, or drive him from the Table because the ordinance was unexpected, or some peculiar calls prevented him from particular previous exercises of retirement, examination, meditation and prayer; no: though it were desirable to be thus employed before, and in general such preparation will greatly conduce to the enlivening our hearts, and be a means of leading us in a more sacramental frame to the Table, yet he that hath the Lord JESUS formed in him, is always called upon to come and receive the tokens of his love.

At the celebration of the feast itself the following observations will deserve our attention, and, I trust, minister to our edification.

I. How we should improve the time before we come to the Lord's Table.

II. How to demean ourselves at the Table.

III. The use we should make of what time remains when we return from the Table.

I. At the celebration of the Lord's Supper we should approach the Table with a frame of mind suited to the particular occasion. As,

1. With a deep sense of our own unworthiness. The service ended, when communicating begins some short time for recollection is afforded us; our first thoughts then should always be of the great condescension of CHRIST, that suffers such rebellious, such sinful dust and ashes as we are to approach his Table: the deeper sense we have of our vileness, the more shall we admire the grace of a dying Saviour; and we can nev-

er enough abase ourselves; the lowest we can think of ourselves will be less than the truth of our state. If the holy Patriarch could say, *he was less than the least of all God's mercies*, what may we? Indeed the confession put into our mouths, that "we "are not worthy of so much as the crumbs that fall from "CHRIST'S Table," should now be deep upon our hearts in some such thoughts as these, "What am I, LORD GOD, that I "should approach thy Table? What am I, who am unworthy "to be put among the dogs of the flock, that I should be fed "with children's bread? What am I, that I should see the King "at his Table, who have so dishonoured him as I have done? "What am I, that I should come to claim such inexpressible "privileges? I, who deserve nothing but death, nothing but "hell?" As *Mephibosheth* said to *David*, *What am I, that the king should look upon such a dead dog as I am?* GOD, to use the language of the Psalmist, loves to *takes us from the dung-hill*, before he *sets us among the princes*. *He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*

2. We should draw near with reverence and godly fear, remembering with whom we are transacting, even with the GOD of glory, before whom ten thousand times ten thousand burning seraphs minister, and whom angels adore; remembering what an awful work we are calling to mind, even that scene which the earth trembled and the sun grew dark to behold; remembering how great an affair is now in hand, no less than the sealing to us the eternal redemption of our souls; these views will shew us that the frame of our minds cannot be enough serious and reverential. If *God is always to be feared in the assembly of his saints, and to be had in reverence of all that are round about him*, when ought our exercise of this temper to be so deep and solemn as in this most holy and sacred assembly? If the angels themselves approaching his throne are represented as veiling their faces with their wings, how ought awe to spread its silent dread upon our souls, and our countenance to receive the sacred impression, when we are approaching his Table? Dare we rush into the presence of an earthly monarch without veneration and respect? and shall we not be much more

careful how we draw near to him whose throne is in the heavens, and whose kingdom ruleth over all? That great JEHOVAH, that eternal GOD, who humbleth himself when he beholds the things in heaven; and how much more when he stoops to treat and commune with poor dying sinful worms of the earth?

3. We should approach without distraction. The sense of GOD should banish every other thought. We should leave the world behind us, and for the time seek to disengage ourselves from every care or concern about it; lifting up our hearts to him to restrain our wanderings, and fixed on the point before us, as much as may be, without diverting from it to the right hand or the left. And in order hereto it will be profitable to keep our eyes from looking round us, to have so settled our worldly affairs before as to prevent their intrusion, and to keep our thoughts recollected, that we may feel ourselves standing as it were naked and open before him with whom we have to do, seeing him that is invisible; the tempers of our minds calm and serene, and all our thoughts fixed, sedate, and attentive.

4. We should come with cheerful confidence in GOD, as our reconciled Father in CHRIST. As we are not going to hear our condemnation, but to receive our renewed acquittance and assurance of favour, we should approach in the character of children, should possess the confidence of children, with gladness and singleness of heart coming to the Table where our Father gives the testimony of his regard to us. To come with slavish trembling and confusion to a feast of love is utterly unseemly, and shews either that we are unacquainted with the nature of the ordinance, or have not that faith which embraces the promises, and realizes the sign. We must remember we are approaching a Table which love, eternal love, hath spread for sinners. That we have such a powerful Advocate for us entered into the heavens, that we may come boldly to the throne of grace, and not fear a disappointment. And that therefore in the strength of all this we may without presumption, if we are really children of GOD, draw near with a true heart in full

assurance of faith. This disposition is as honourable to GOD as comfortable to ourselves, and most needful now to be exercised, when every soul should rejoice and be exceeding glad, and triumph in the GOD of his salvation. When people come to the Communion as criminals to the bar, it plainly shews they are still under the Law, and are in bondage unto fear; that they have been resting on their own preparation, and their own worthiness, as though they must be in such a measure good, and they were afraid they had not arrived at the measure they proposed to themselves; thus making faith void, and the promise of none effect. But believing souls (unless *for a season, if need be, they be in heaviness through manifold temptations*) will be cheerful ones; they come humble yet confident, serious yet cheerful.

5. We should draw near with hunger and thirst after righteousness. Just as at our meals, appetite makes the feast, so it is here; *He filleth the hungry with good things, and sendeth the rich empty away.* Such earnest cravings then as your body hath after food, such your souls should have after CHRIST and his righteousness, that you may be found in him. Consider what you would feel if you travelled through a barren and dry land, would you not say, Hungry and thirsty your soul fainted? would not you cry, Water, water, to cool the burning tongue? would not you drink deep into the stream, when from the rock the river issued forth at your cry, and refreshed your parched throat? This world is that barren land, your soul that parched traveller, CHRIST the living rock, the ordinances the pools of water, to which, if any man thirst, let him come and drink, yea, come and take of the water of life freely. See then that your hunger and thirst be felt, see that you relish and find such expressions as these agreeable to your frame and temper; *As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so longeth my soul after thee, O God. My soul is athirst for God, even for the living God; when shall I come to appear in the presence of God!* Then you will find your heart drawn up to greater nearness to GOD; your affections will be more united to him, and, as the refreshments of food to a hungry man, this feast will be *a feast*

of fat things, of fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees well refined.

6. We should come with enlivened expectations of receiving according to the necessities of our souls. Having before examined our state in order to discover what graces we most stood in need of, what corruptions called for mortification, what trying circumstances have most endangered us, here we must look upon ourselves as sure to receive grace and strength proportioned to our wants. GOD who calls upon us is the LORD of all grace, and he gives like a King, liberally to every one that asketh, and this too usually *exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think;* all that CHRIST has purchased, and that is no less than all the blessings of time and eternity, we may put in our request for; and instead of being thought unreasonable in our desires, the more enlarged they are the more pleasing will they be to GOD. We cannot expect to receive so much as he is willing to give, full measure heaped up and running over will he pour into the bosom of those who come to him with enlivened faith, and big with expectation of receiving, not for our deserts indeed, but for his righteousness sake.

7. We should approach with fervent charity. This is commanded us above all things, and most needful when we are celebrating together this visible Communion of Saints; where we join in one body to eat the same bread and drink the same cup. Before you come here you will have taken care to purge out the old leaven of malice and wickedness, that, as the elect of GOD, you might put on bowels of mercies, kindness, long suffering, and with a peculiar affection love the brethren; here this love will have a lively exercise on the objects before you; you will find your heart ascending up in prayer over them, thankful for them, delighting in them, regarding them as dear unto you as your own soul, at least desiring to be so affected, and chiding your heart for the deadness which at any time you experience. Then whilst the Minister of the LORD is praying over them that "the Body and Blood of CHRIST would keep their bodies and souls unto everlasting life," you will be wrestling in prayer

together for them, that they may not go away without a blessing; according to the promise that *where two or three are agreed together concerning any thing they should ask in Christ's name, it should be given them.*

8. We should approach with a lively sense of the transaction itself. CHRIST crucified before our eyes, should pierce our hearts with shame for our sins. His love should awaken our most lively affections; his unspeakable gift draw out our warmest gratitude; and all our souls melted into self-loathing, humble joy, and holy delight, should testify how highly we esteem this most solemn ordinance. These views dwelling upon our minds, will greatly contribute to render our devotions before we communicate, fervent, humble, and joyous; (and surely our hearts must be hard indeed, if on our knees there before the LORD we find not some gracious relentings, some delightful enlargements of soul towards JESUS CHRIST) nor is a lively sensible experience of these things at any time more desirable or more proper than now, considering where we are, what we remember, and how we are interested in it.

These are the things which will shew our frame of spirit to be sacramental. Not that I would mean to say, that though we should come short in one or other or all of these, we should therefore be unfit for the ordinance; no: but we should labour after these, be humbled for our great defectiveness and low advancements, whilst the higher measures we attain of these things the more comfortable will the communion be, as well as more profitable.

II. Having thus improved the short time before the Lord's Supper, when we come to the Table we must mind the grand businesss we have to do there, which is to receive CHRIST's pledge in token that he hath received us, and to make a solemn surrender of our souls to him; so that henceforth *our Maker is our husband*, and we are no longer *our own* but his. Whilst the Minister then is about to put the elements into our hands, and to make his prayer over us, this surrender should be made in the following way.

1. Deliberately. Having counted the cost, on one hand we see a merciful and all-sufficient Saviour, who hath all grace to pardon, and all power to renew, promising us to undertake for us, to bless, preserve and comfort us; yet withal, we being corrupt and fallen creatures, this cannot be done without a course of self-denial and mortification of our members upon earth, though to encourage us to it this be most intimately connected with eternal glory. On the other hand we see the indulgences of flesh and sense, the pleasures of sin for a season, but withal the curse of GOD in time and in eternity; we are therefore through grace fully disposed to renounce the one and choose the other. This cannot be done too clearly and coolly. Before at our devotions we cannot be too lively and fervent in spirit, here we cannot be too deliberate. Choosing CHRIST as our best portion, whatever mortification and self-denial, whatever reproach, whatever difficulties may attend his service, that so we may not in a fit of devotion swear we will *go with him to prison and to death;* and then by and bye, when corruptions strive, and Satan tempts, or tribulation comes, be offended, and go back from our engagements; but so simply and steadily set your hands to the plough as never to look back, but *be faithful unto death, that we may receive the crown of life.*

2. Humbly. We may not be confident but *in the Lord, and the power of his might.* We are promising things, the least of which is above our strength. GOD must *work in us to do,* as he hath *wrought in us to will;* and it is with this view we must surrender up ourselves to him, humbly sensible that we are not in any wise *sufficient of ourselves,* but we *commit our souls into his hands as a faithful Creator.* The sense of our own nothingness should especially lie upon our hearts, when we are admitted to this awful covenant, and receive the seals of it into our hands. All is from the LORD, he alone that hath begun his work in us can perfect the same, and enable us to abide faithful to the vows which are upon us.

3. Cheerfully. We are a willing people, we give up our souls to CHRIST, and all we have, and are to be for ever his; not

so much because we are bound to do it, as because we delight to do it. We are a free-will offering, drawn not driven, hearty not reserved; love fixes our choice, and CHRIST is to us all in all. We wish we had a thousand hearts to give him, we would not hesitate to part with any thing he calls for, we would delight in that which he commands. With a willing mind we take his easy yoke and light burden, and are pleased with every opportunity of renewing our bonds, that we may thereby be united closer to the LORD our head.

4. Sincerely. This indeed is the life of the whole. A double heart, a reserved surrender, is an abomination before GOD. If our eye pities, or heart spares one evil temper, one sin, if we should *dissemble with our lips, and flatter him with our tongue*, woe unto us; he that seeth our thoughts afar off would condemn us even on our knees at the Table. Though we should deceive ourselves by our hypocrisy, GOD cannot be mocked. We must be sincere before him, our naked souls should be exposed to his view, and an honest appeal to our hearts that GOD himself knows we desire to make no reserve. See to this, that you make no partial surrender. GOD must have all our hearts or none; if we divide them by fixing one part on the world, if we would plead for ever so little of its sinful indulgences, if we want to reconcile the services of GOD and mammon, allowing part of our affections to the pleasures, vanities, interests, or gain of this present evil world, and think GOD will be satisfied with the remainder, we are utterly mistaken. The true surrender is to give up all, and to take CHRIST as Lord of all; our King to reign over us, as well as our propitiation and atonement. This is sincerity, much talked of, little known. See that it be your own case, without it the strongest promises, the greatest outward reformation, the most lively pangs of devotion, a torrent of tears, or the most solemn remorse, will but deceive you. Coolly, humbly, cheerfully, and wholly, without partiality and without hypocrisy, desire to give up your soul to CHRIST; that so you may be able to adopt the words of an excellent Christian, and testify as he did:

" But if I might make some reserve,
" And duty did not call;
" I love my LORD with such a love
" That I would give him all."

It will be a blessed ordinance indeed if you can see such to be the frame of your heart at CHRIST'S Table, and seal it by the solemn pledges of the Body and Blood of CHRIST which are put into your hands. Here then you will see at the first view the absurdity and ignorance it betrays, to be coming up to the Lord's Table reading some book of devotion, and in a formal dull way to be supplying the want of spirituality by such a lifeless repetition of a number of words. Surely if you come to give up your heart to CHRIST, if you feel the obligations lying upon you to do so, you can never need to read it out of a book; your eye should be on your heart, not the paper; and you should be looking to the dear Saviour whom you are remembering, and calling forth this heartiness, simplicity, and sincerity of soul with which you choose the LORD for your portion.

Thus you may know how to behave at the LORD'S Table. And then,

III. When you depart from thence, I suppose the following things will be a proper exercise for you.

1. You should retire to your place, and there begin with an *Amen* to all that hath passed; renewing before GOD the solemn renunciation of sin and choice of CHRIST which you have made, and the hearty purpose you have of abiding by it. You should there offer again your earnest supplications for grace to be faithful, and that you may really be enabled to receive the Lord JESUS, as a master to serve, as well as a portion to enjoy; that so this GOD may be your GOD for ever and ever, and you may be his even unto death.

2. You should depart with admiration of the condescension and grace you have experienced. That ever the GOD of glory

should stoop to look upon you; that ever JESUS CHRIST should admit you to his Table; that ever the HOLY GHOST should make your heart his dwelling; that ever such great and precious promises should be made to you; that ever you should be permitted to receive the seals of the covenant established with the high and holy One that inhabiteth eternity; that ever he should institute such an ordinance to confirm your faith in his purposes of mercy towards you. How astonishing is all this, enough almost to surpass belief, did not GOD himself assure us that all this is his will concerning us! Yet still be more amazed, when you consider what you are, a creature in the lowest rank of rational beings, a poor worm whose breath is in his nostrils, a dying man sprung from the dust and returning to the dust again; and more than all, a sinful, a corrupted creature by nature, by practice become the abomination of that GOD who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; but now pardoned, adopted, counted righteous, sanctified, exalted to the most amazing privileges, even to be the heir of GOD, and joint-heir with CHRIST. Hear, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth! Admire, ye angels that surround his throne, whilst ye minister to us below! What tongue can tell the wonders of redeeming grace! who can help breaking forth in astonishment, What manner of love is this! whilst overwhelmed with wonder too big for utterance, in silence we believe, admire, and adore? Such sensibility will shew a right apprehension of the greatness of the grace bestowed on us. And,

3. We should be filled with thankfulness. Such a frame is the consequence of the former, admiring the grace, our hearts cry out, *What reward shall I give unto the Lord for all his benefits bestowed upon me? Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise his holy name; praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. I will praise him with joyful lips, yea, as long as I have any being will I sing praises to my God.* These are the out-breathings of the soul who hath tasted that the LORD is gracious; not the formal thanks of pharisaical ceremony, but the inward, deep, heart-felt expressions of a soul that labours to tell the Lord JESUS how deeply

he admires the grace in which he hath partaken; and a blessed frame this is. The comfort of it to the soul is as great as the honour done to GOD thereby; *for whoso offereth me praise*, saith he, *he glorifieth me*.

4. We should depart with a sense of our great imperfection in all our services. This is needful, lest, if we have received much spiritual consolation, we should be exalted above measure; and truly cause enough there is for it, seeing in our best attendances upon GOD there is much lacking, and when we have done all may justly say we are unprofitable servants. And who that knows his own heart will not have cause to mourn over some unbelief, some coldness, some deadness, some wandering, some indisposition, some want of a lively exercise of grace, some undue affections? This all must be laid to our corruptions, whilst all that is good in us should be ascribed to GOD's free grace, and the praise given to him to whom alone praise is due. Our very communicatings indeed would be our confusion and condemnation, yea, even of the best of us, if we had not one in heaven to bear the iniquity of our holy things, and to pardon the imperfection of our services, as well as the guilt of our sins; and therefore always to be clothed with humility, and to stand before GOD in the perfect righteousness of CHRIST, is the way to be always accepted of GOD.

5. We should rejoice in CHRIST JESUS, and in these fresh testimonies of his love towards us. To be abased for what we see amiss in ourselves, and yet happy in CHRIST JESUS, explains that strange but blessed paradox of St *Paul*, *though sorrowful, yet always rejoicing*. Indeed our sorrows are a part of our joy, and that we can feel or mourn over our imperfections is no slight testimony of CHRIST's love towards us. And when shall we rejoice if not now, when we have seen the Lord, have found a welcome and received refreshment at his Table, have joined ourselves to him in bonds of an everlasting covenant, have espoused our souls to him in truth and in righteousness, and put on the seal of our adoption, the ring of our contract, and enjoyed spiritual communion with him, and obtained new

supplies of grace from him? surely may we say, *I will rejoice and be glad in thee, I will remember thy love more than wine. I will make mention of the loving-kindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all the great goodness that the Lord hath bestowed upon me.* Happy, holy joy! how different from the mirth of vanity, which makes the heart sad! how different from the short-lived joys of this world, which are but as the suddenly expiring blaze of thorns. This is the foretaste of eternal bliss, a drop of those everlasting pleasures out of the ocean, from which we shall shortly be replenished at GOD'S right hand for evermore.

6. We should depart with fresh courage to fight the LORD'S battles against the world, the flesh, and the devil. It was said of the primitive Christians, when they met for these holy purposes, that "they went in as lambs but came out as "lions." So should it be said of us. Receiving strength from the LORD, we should depart with full purpose of heart to cleave unto and labour for the LORD; to shew forth all holy zeal and boldness, and never to be ashamed of our profession, or act unsuitably to it. This ordinance should mightily confirm, strengthen, and stablish us, so that our souls, manifestly refreshed by it, may be pressing forwards amidst surrounding enemies with renewed vigour, *towards the mark for the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus.*

7. Lastly, We should depart with increasing desires after the kingdom of heaven. If in these lower courts the glimpse of glory be so delightful, what must the full blaze of that beatific vision be, when we shall no longer through the dark glass of faith, but face to face behold JESUS as he is? When we shall see him with our mortal eye enthroned to bless and glorify his people, and find all our souls infinitely more happy in the intimate union to and communion with him, than now it is possible for us to conceive. Here our joys are at best imperfect, and some tears of sorrow for what remains of darkness and sin still steal down our cheeks; but there every tear shall be wiped from our eyes, there imperfection will be no more, we

shall be like him as he is, *perfect as our Father which is in heaven is perfect.* Hath our faith then entered into that within the vail, have we seen JESUS sitting on the right hand of GOD, how can we but *desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better?* how can we but long for the wings of a dove, that we may fly away and be at rest in this dear Saviour's bosom? Is faith at present so comfortable? is hope only so pleasing? what must it then be when faith is lost in sight, and hope in enjoyment? See then that your souls pant high for glory, and that you go away from this Table with such a heavenly mind, as both brings down a taste of heaven below, and sharpens the desire after the full enjoyment of everlasting rest. This will be a profitable use of the ordinance. I can pray for nothing more conducive to your eternal salvation, than that such may be abidingly and increasingly the holy frame of your mind. Then you will know the blessing of discerning the LORD's Body, and find by delightful experience, that the Body and Blood of CHRIST thus received will keep your body and soul unto everlasting life.

CHAP. V.

Directions for the Communicant's daily Walk with GOD after receiving the LORD's SUPPER.

HAVING hitherto led you on from the nature of the ordinance to the dispositions necessary for partaking of it, and the frame wherein we should approach the Lord's Table, I would conclude the whole with some considerations of what sort our after-conversation should be, and by what means we may be enabled so to walk as becomes our profession. This being the great end of the ordinance, that its influence may abide with us, and that it be not looked upon as a ceremonious visit, which we may forget till the time returns again. And here I solemnly admonish all you who have partaken in these holy

mysteries, to *take heed to yourselves lest you lose the things you have wrought.* Remember *Judas*, who no sooner received the sop but Satan entered into him; and, though he so often had eat and drank at CHRIST's Table, was a son of perdition, and betrayed his Master. And therefore if, as we have engaged, we would take CHRIST for our Master, and live as his faithful and covenant servants, or rather brethren and friends, then must we shew forth the following conversation.

1. We should go forth into the world professing his name. We must not be ashamed of CHRIST nor his cause, we should speak for his honour, and glory in his cross. Profession now becomes peculiarly demanded from us as Communicants; and whilst in these evil days vital Christianity and real religion is branded with every opprobrious name that an ungodly world, who know not the truth, can invent; we must heartily welcome these reproaches, and walk so as to deserve them; not silent, hiding our heads, sealing up our lips, and leaving the world to their own ways, but by an open declaration, at every proper season bearing testimony against them, that their works are evil; boldly rebuking vice by word as well as practice; having *no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness*, but separating ourselves from all intimate society with every brother who walketh disorderly, whose conversation agrees not with the simplicity of the gospel. This will make us singular, it is true; we shall be unlike the world, and displease the world; but wherefore did we meet at CHRIST's Table but to make our solemn declaration to him that *we are not of the world, even as he is not of the world?* and how shall we dare be so unfaithful as to go forth and mix again familiarly and as bosom friends with these who are *enemies to the cross of Christ, who glory in their shame, who mind earthly things?* To take up our cross and follow CHRIST, was our sacramental vow. But how unfaithfully have many of you hitherto performed it? how utterly strangers are you this day to any reproach or shame for CHRIST's sake? where is your cross that you have borne in the world? Alas! you go from the Lord's Table and return again to the world just as

before, lost in its cares, pleasures, and vanities; and how then should the world possibly have any quarrel with you? *ye are of the world, and therefore the world loves its own.* You never by your professions disturb the slumbers or security of the unawakened souls around you; the form of a ceremonious duty will reprove nobody, unless there be afterwards something more of profession than this mere act of communicating. But be sincere, and then you cannot escape; go into the world, speak as a Christian, profess your views, live for CHRIST, and then the world and you will have no longer fellowship; for if you are thus chosen out of the world, the world cannot but hate you. Let this, brethren, comfort you who bear forth CHRIST'S name in the world, as well as at his Table; the cross is an honourable badge, to be reproached for righteousness sake is happiness. The remembrance of our surrender to CHRIST will make us count all things light and easy, and suffering as a Christian we need not be ashamed; *we know in whom we have believed;* we know under whose banners we have taken the Sacrament to fight, and GOD forbid we should quit our colours for shame, reproach, evil report, dishonour, or reviling, yea, though we were called for his sake to prison or to death.

2. We must practise as we profess. Going forth to give up our whole bodies, souls, and spirits, to CHRIST, and to walk worthy the high vocation wherewith we are called, we should carry away with us, impressed upon our hearts, the vows we have made, that so whenever sin would tempt us, we may have this answer to make, *How shall I do this wicked thing, and sin against God,* who have but lately so solemnly given up myself to him? If CHRIST hath been pleased to take us for his own, shall we rob him of the purchase of his blood, and dishonour him who hath so highly exalted us? surely this would be as ungrateful as guilty. The eyes of the world will be upon us, and they are piercing and quick, if they see our conversation to be nothing different from their own, they will say, *What do ye more than others?* and what advantage will this give to the adversaries of the Lord to blaspheme? "These, say they, are your communicants; here they are all devotion, but go home with them

"from church, and see them as passionate and proud, as covetous and worldly, as vain and trifling, as false and deceitful, as any of their neighbours." And if this be the case with any of you, brethren, what a curse will it bring upon you? what a disgrace will it be to your profession? and how will religion be wounded, even in the house of its friends, by your unbecoming conversation? may not the adversaries of the Lord then be hardened in their sins, and confirmed in their prejudices, whilst they see under the outward cloak of profession that rank hypocrisy lurks within; and, saving outward appearance, that you are neither more humble, more holy, more mortified, more heavenly minded, than themselves? Surely it were better for such an one, unless mercy restore him, *that a milstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were cast into the midst of the sea*, than that ever he approached the Table of the Lord. But if you would not have this heavy guilt lying upon your souls, then you must labour to *to adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things*, by such an unblameable conduct, that they who seek occasion against you may be disappointed, and find no evil thing justly to say of you. Your lives should be as the light of the morning which shineth more and more unto the perfect day, and your works such as may glorify your Father which is in heaven. Then if men speak evil of your good conversation in CHRIST, these adversaries of the Lord shall be found liars, and all who will inquire even *here*, will detect their malice; and *in the great day of the Lord* they shall be covered with confusion, and receive the reward of *lying lips, and a deceitful tongue* in *the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.*

3. We must go forth particularly to exercise the duties of our respective stations and relations in life. Herein especially the power of religion is shewn forth; a passionate master, a fretful mistress, a haughty husband, a self-willed wife, a cruel father, an undutiful son, a slothful servant, or a false friend, none of these can possibly have any pretensions to real Christianity. To suppose it possible, would be supposing a contradiction possible, that light and darkness, CHRIST and *Belial* could agree. Par-

ticular watchfulness will be needful. In every family lies the greatest proof of the sincerity of the members of it; they will prove their fidelity to CHRIST, by their love one towards another, shewn in the conscientious discharge of their several relations; the master ruling with gentleness, the servant labouring with cheerfulness and fidelity; the husband kind and tender, the wife meek and obedient; the father mixing parental affection with correction, the son manifesting filial love with dutiful submission, and so in every other case. This will make our houses temples, and the charity, forbearance, patience, and submission shewn one to another in such families, will be the most convincing proof that CHRIST really dwells under that roof; and such it is required of Communicants to be. And towards those who are without, the same spirit must shew itself.

(1.) In the uprightness of all our dealings, in our intercourse with the world: *We shall not go beyond or defraud our brother in any matter, but rendering to every man their dues, shall owe no man any thing.* We shall do our work as under the bonds of the covenant, *not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of the Lord, doing the will of God from the heart.* We shall deal with each other in the simplicity which is in CHRIST, renouncing every hidden work of dishonesty, and abhorring the appearances of fraud or injustice. And thus walking under an higher principle than the world is ever acquainted with, even under the eye and as in the presence of a heart-searching GOD, shall convince even those we cannot convert, that there is a power in the religion of JESUS CHRIST to do that which nothing upon earth can do besides.

(2.) We must shew it in the meekness of our conversations. The power of religion is glorious when it tames the impetuosity of our passions, softens our severity into mildness, and puts a bridle both on our hearts and tongues. Coming from the Table of a meek and lowly JESUS, we must needs learn of him to be meek and lowly of heart, if we would find rest unto our souls. Is is strange hypocrisy to come with pretences of seeking *the wisdom that is from above, which is first pure, then peace-*

able, gentle, easy to be intreated, and going home to disturb all around us by our passions and perverseness; instead of gentleness, to be a lion in our house, and frantic among our servants; instead of easiness to be entreated, implacable and unmerciful; this is not to partake of the Table of the Lord, but the table of devils, for these are the dispositions of Satan. Let this thing, brethren, be seriously attended to, let it appear what CHRIST at his Table hath done for you by the change wrought in your tempers, by the mildness, sweetness, compassion, forbearance and gentleness of your conversation.

(3.) Be temperate in all things. In the *world*, that its anxious cares and concerns do not engage you immoderately. In your *body*, that you deny its cravings, making *no provision for the flesh*, by sloth, drunkennes, gluttony, or pleasure, to fulfil the lusts thereof; *They that are Christ's have* both *crucified the world*, and the flesh, *with its affections and lusts*. A worldly coveteus Communicant, a drunken intemperate Communicant, a lewd and carnal Communicant, what can be so monstreus a thing? Can we receive the body of CHRIST in one hand, whilst we grasp the world in the other? Can the same eyes that have looked upon a crucified Saviour, indulge wantonness, or be greedy of gain? Can these hearts that have been made the temples of the HOLY GHOST, erect the altar of Mammon there, or entertain those vile affections which must defile the sacred place? Let it appear then that you are now no longer debtors to the flesh to live after the flesh; that *the world is crucified unto you, and you unto the world;* that you have higher enjoyments than flesh or sense, and nobler prospects than earth can give you; and this may well make you dead to the love of worldly things, and temperate in the use of them.

(4.) Shew forth your love to your brethren. *As good stewards of the manifold gifts of God, according as God hath given to every one, let him minister the same to him that lacketh.* Do we abound in riches? let us abound also in liberality; have we but little? let us *shew our diligence to give of that*

little. The trifle we contribute at the Table should be as the first-fruits to sanctify our other gifts, in token that we do them all in CHRIST'S name and for his sake. But there are other and far greater demonstrations of love which we are called to exercise towards our brethren, than the relief of their poverty, such as bearing the infirmities of the weak, condescending to the meanest, ready to help them with our presence, advice or influence, where any or all of these may be necessary; counting none beneath our notice or regard; seeing the unspeakable condescensions of CHRIST to us, who *though he was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God, yet humbled himself, and made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant*. Have we really seen him come *not to be ministered unto, but to minister?* have we seen his love *in giving his life a ransom for us?* how ought we then to love one another, yea to be ready to lay down, if need be, our lives for the brethren? for how dear ought those bodies to be to us for which CHRIST'S body was given? how precious ought those souls to be in our eyes, for which CHRIST'S soul *was sorrowful, even unto death?* This universal love to all, but especially to those *who are of the household of faith*, we must go forth to exercise, that so all men may know we are CHRIST'S disciples, by that unfeigned affection we bear one towards another.

(5.) Our conversation after this ordinance should be more heavenly. What hath a Christian any longer to do among the tombs of this world, who is come from remembering a living, dying, risen and ascended Saviour? *Our conversation*, says St. *Paul, is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ*. Have we there remembered his coming again? what have we then to do but to make ready for it, that our affections being set on things in heaven, not on things on earth, we may welcome the day of his appearance and glory. Here is the grand evidence of a Christian. Others direct all their aims, pursuits, and designs, after the things which are seen and are temporal; he seeks always the things above, the things which are unseen to others, but realized by faith to him, and

most important because eternal. See that this be your experience, that every time you communicate you find the effects of it thus evident, in lifting up your hearts after CHRIST in the heavens; in quickening your preparation to meet him in the clouds, and continually making you more ready and disposed for that inheritance among the saints in light which in the ordinance was sealed to you, and to which you were called.

Such should be our conversation after every sacramental occasion, that all who see us may take knowledge of us that we have been with JESUS; and behold from our walk the brightness of the grace communicated to us, making us shine as lights in the world, like *Moses'* face when he came down from the mount of vision. I would to GOD this was more the case, and that all that were joined to the Lord in bonds of outward communion with him, were thus one spirit with him; walked more as CHRIST walked. I am very sure it is the great grief of every truly Christian heart, whenever they behold the contrary, and see these spots at our feasts, *feasting themselves without fear, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.* May you and I fear for ourselves, and give greater *diligence to make our calling and election sure*, continuing to walk thus as persons professing godliness. In order to which we shall find the following means most highly conducive, and I pray GOD you may have such desires thus to give up your hearts to GOD, as heartily to exercise yourselves unto godliness in all the ways the SPIRIT points out to you; and these are chiefly,

1. Watchfulness.
2. Prayer.
3. The word.
4. The company of LIVELY Christians.

1. To walk as becometh your Christian profession you must be watchful. The enemies whom you renounce are mightier than you, wise, watchful, and ensnaring. The devil continually spreads his toils, and is never perhaps busier with us than after such a season, when the fervour of devotion being

somewhat abated, our hearts are more exposed to his attacks; then he would step in, tempt us to return unto folly, follow his insinuations with some bait laid in our way, and so work upon the remainders of corruption within us in order to betray us into his hands. Thus after the sop Satan entered into *Judas*. As not ignorant therefore of his devices we should especially beware of security. *Let not him that putteth on the armour boast as he who taketh it off.* When the cold turf covers our head, *then the wicked will cease from troubling, and the weary have perfect rest;* but here every step we take we are among lions, and must stand on our watch-tower, fearing always, and working out our salvation with that trembling and care which can only secure it. A holy jealousy is the great preservative against falling away. The moment we begin to slumber, our watchful adversary is ready to take advantage against us; but *blessed is the man whom his Lord when he cometh shall find watching.*

2. Prayer is the greatest means of preserving the influence of this ordinance upon our hearts. This is closely connected with the former, watchfulness and prayer go together; we must pray that we may watch, and continue watching unto prayer. It is not enough once to draw nigh unto GOD, but we should daily be keeping near to him, and upon our knees in our closets acting over again that surrender which we have made at the Table. Prayer is the breath of the divine nature, of the new creation begun in us, and by it we should be offering up our souls daily to him from whom cometh our salvation. By prayer we should seek to maintain an holy frame of spirit, appearing solemnly and frequently in secret in GOD'S presence, that we may habitually walk under the sense of it. Whoever hath any experience of divine things will find his constant need, and the gracious influence of earnest and importunate prayer; such an one cannot but pray, all his soul depends upon it, he knows he shall quickly grow careless the moment he becomes prayerless; and therefore he remarks the smallest decays in private prayer, stirs up his soul to the lively exercise of it, and pleads for the SPIRIT to blow up the fire of all holy graces in his heart. To

neglect prayer, or to perform it with an habitual negligence and formality, is a most suspicious sign that all approaches to GOD at his Table were mere matters of form, the work of a day, not the spiritual exercises of the heart, desiring nearness to, and communion with, GOD; for where this is the case in one ordinance it must be so in another: they who long to see CHRIST at his Table, are daily setting him before them when they bow their knees at his footstool: and this both prepares the way before, and keeps alive the sense of what they have found at CHRIST'S communion afterwards. Pray therefore, I beseech you, without ceasing, as you hope to stand fast, as you would be true to your engagements, as you profess the name of Christian, as you would walk as becometh your profession, as you would shew forth the sincerity of your surrender to CHRIST by the discharge of your several relations in life, as you would have your conversation in heaven, I beseech you be diligent in private prayer; else you will dishonour your vocation, you will walk in disobedience as do others, you will have your conversation upon earth, you will be a slave to the world, and notwithstanding all you may do besides, your fall will be more dreadful, and your ruin most inevitable. You must pray or perish.

3. The word of GOD is another great means to keep us from falling. Herein we must exercise ourselves day and night. Out of it we must be taught the way wherein we must go. This must be the *guide to our feet and the lantern to our paths;* and in our course to glory be our map and chart. Communion seasons are places of refreshment in the way to strengthen us for our journey: CHRIST in the word is the way itself, in which after such refreshment we are to walk. To the word therefore you must apply to know more perfectly the mind of GOD, that you may follow it more faithfully; and if you have been sincere with CHRIST you will do so; *I made haste and delayed not to keep thy commandments;* you will keep the Scriptures upon your heart rising up and lying down, they will be daily in your hands at any season of leisure, and particularly before you set yourself to the exercise of prayer. This is the way to be taught of

GOD, and instructed in the way that you should go. You will find thus your heart built up, more determined for CHRIST, and more stedfast in his service; having set his commandments ever before you, and being stedfastly purposed through grace not to sin against them.

4. Lastly, The company of lively Christians is a choice means and wonderous help to keep alive the serious impressions made upon the soul. *As iron sharpeneth iron, so doth the countenance of a man his friend.* Experience will best confirm the truth of this observation. Man is by nature social, needing the help one of another, and Christians more so than other men, who have new and stronger bands than nature to unite them; and have many enemies that none others know. To associate therefore for the purposes of religious improvement is not more comfortable than necessary; *How can one be warm alone?* says the Prophet. But when we join to exhort, reprove, rebuke, and admonish one another, then the fire catches from heart to heart, each receives some quickening or consolation, or correction from the other's experience and conversation; and thus the communion of saints before the Lord is still maintained, till the season returns when we shall come together again in GOD's house, and renew the bonds of union and fellowship one with another. Let me therefore recommend it to you to seek the company of those whose course and conduct is most holy, heavenly, and zealous; to be free one with another; to open your hearts as Christians in that mutual confidence which none but real Christians have any experience of, to delight in social prayer, and be desirous to join in it whenever you have opportunity. A conduct indeed, which to those who know nothing of heart-religion, is always offensive and disliked, but which all who have seriously set their souls to seek the kingdom of GOD in the first place, have found both most necessary to keep alive their holy purposes, and most conducive to the comfort as well as edification of their souls.

In this way you will always be going forward, and be growing in grace as in days, riper for glory as you advance towards

it. You will be walking in an holy conformity to your profession, and approving your fidelity to CHRIST your Master. And thus from eating and drinking at CHRIST'S Table below, you will shortly go to drink with him the new wine of eternal consolation in the kingdom of your Father.

CHAP. VI.

Directions for PRAYER.

PRAYER is the desire of the soul after GOD, arising from a sense of want, and expressing a dependence on his promises for a supply according to our necessities.

It is evident that the heart must be engaged, or there can be no prayer. The words of the lip or the bending of the knee are hypocrisy without this. The finest produce of the understanding, whether the composition of others or our own, is no better than sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal, if the spirit of prayer be wanting. Whilst, on the other hand, the simplest expressions, yea, perhaps the most ungrammatical language, may convey the fervent desires of effectual prayer most acceptably before the GOD *who trieth the heart and the reins.*

The most natural method of prayer is the artless language of the soul, dictated by want and warmed with desire; and I suppose every soul really awakened to feel his necessities, will be able, for the most part, to speak what he feels without any assistance.

I commend extempore prayer, because I have not only my own experience, the experience of all living Christians, but the very reason of the thing to plead for it. Yet there are cases and circumstances wherein we may no doubt receive assistance

from the labours of others; as *Aaron* was a mouth to *Moses*, so there may be helps to such as are slow of speech.

In secret we should not exclude forms of prayer, though for the most part they are rather a clog than a help to devotion, when solely made use of. They seem useful,

1. When used as a directory we place it before us, having first considered it as applicable to our state, and in the exercise of prayer enlarge upon the particular circumstances we are in.

2. At times we may find such a want of expression as to need assistance of that kind, and may experience our hearts more quickened by it. Here the end of prayer being considered, what most promotes that is certainly best.

3. At first, having never been used at all to pray before, we may make use of the mouth of our neighbours to express our own case, and teach our lips a language which the heart wants to utter.

But the great use of forms of prayer seems to be in social worship.

As prayer is the duty of every individual for himself in secret, so is it also enjoined on all Christians in their social relations. The master of every family is bound by the religion of JESUS to make his house a house of prayer. When Christians meet together in private as well as in the congregation, prayer is the most proper and natural employment. Abundant evidence of this occurs in the New Testament.

The gifts of GOD are variously dispensed. Some have a facility of expression and readiness of elocution which is denied to others. Hence some can speak for others without the assistance of a form of prayer, and this is undoubtedly the most profitable; for in this case the knowledge of the people's state gives the person who prays an opportunity of adapting his re-

quests more exactly to the case of those who join him; besides that there is something much more enlivening to devotion in such exercises, when done with propriety and judgment, than in the best composed forms.

But as these gifts of knowledge and utterance may not be possessed by many, who yet desire to pray with and for each other, there the spiritual assistance of some experimental Christian's prayer may be of the most abundant usefulness*. I confess I cannot but wish that some who take upon them to be mouths of others, had greater diffidence of themselves. To hear a man before others praying absurdly, improperly, and incoherently, is as offensive to men, as it must be displeasing to GOD; and can serve only to shew the pride, not the humility, of the speaker, and the folly, not the teachableness, of the hearers. Prayer must be ever a reasonable service, it ceases to be so when in such hands.

But the sloth of some, and too great concern of others, about the manner of acquitting themselves in prayer, are equally sinful. Instead of improving their gifts and graces they continue servilely bound to a form, however in itself good. They to whom it is given should use to the honour of the giver the gift he bestows: but if we make not the trial, we cannot tell what our gifts are.

As every gift improves by exercise, so does the gift of prayer particularly. We know not what we can do till we try, and it is a certain fact, that persons of very slender abilities,

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* As many sincere people who stand in need of helps either for private or social prayer, may be at a loss for proper forms, I would therefore recommend Mr. *Jenks*'s Devotions, as by far the most animated and spiritual of any I ever met with, and best suited both for families and the states and exigencies of particular Christians. There are also in that manual some excellent prayers and meditations for the assistance of pious Communicants, and a very sweet and devout paraphrase upon the Creed.

and who could scarce express themselves clearly on any other subject, have obtained, by exercise in prayer, not only method but propriety; and many a heart hath been warmed with the prayers of those whom the world hath accounted weak as well as illiterate. Every person therefore should make the attempt.

There is a shame and diffidence which usually attends the first essays, which may for a little while distract the attention, and make us too solicitous about the persons with whom we are, instead of being wholly taken up with the consideration of him to whom we speak; but this in general is soon got over by use. Mean time I suppose it would be very profitable for such as begin the worship of God in their houses, or with their friends, to have before them some evangelical book of devotions, that if they found themselves confused or barren of thought, they might recur to it, till they had attained greater ease, and overcome that bashfulness which hurried them.

Where there is really not a gift of prayer, where persons are conscious that they cannot so profitably perform the exercises of devotion without the help of a composed prayer, there it would be sinful in them not to make use of it. I have heard of some that because they could not pray extempore in their families would not pray at all with them; which seems as absurd as to say, because I cannot feed my family with delicacies of my own providing they shall starve, though I might have made use of my neighbour's offers, who had broken his bread on purpose for my use.

It must be observed, that there are persons who have much of the gift of prayer, who have not the spirit of prayer; these, like the ravens who fed *Elijah*, bring good food to those who join with them, whilst their own pride and vanity of their abilities is the carrion on which they feed themselves. Their prayers may be blessed unto others, but they are an abomination to God, and bring a curse upon their own souls.

It will be needless to say many things in commendation of prayer, either respecting its necessity or excellence. The soul

who is brought to a sensibility about his real state, feels both with an evidence which is beyond all that we can speak; and the soul who is yet dead in trespasses and sins cannot pray, though we should write volumes to persuade him to it. For *he that cometh to God must first believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him.* All the miscalled prayers of unbelievers have no more of a spiritual service in them, than howling hath of harmony.

For the sake of those who have need of assistance, I have subjoined some few helps to prayer, which may be enlarged upon, and made particularly applicable to the case of those who use them; intimating by the way, that the more we unbosom the very thoughts and secrets of our souls to GOD, the more profitable will be the service.

Praying that a spirit of prayer and supplication may be poured out upon every soul into whose hands this book may fall, I commend them and it to the grace of our Lord JESUS CHRIST.

AS no Communicant can live without daily application to the throne of grace, the hints about prayer above given have an evident connection with the subject of the foregoing chapters. I have only to observe farther, that in the specimen of a prayer which follows I have descended from general confession to particular, from general wants to particular ones. Persons must examine themselves where their bosom sin lies, what graces they most need, what temptations they most labour under, and adapt any portion of what follows to their own state and circumstances; it being designed not so much as a form, as to assist the infirmities of the weak.

¶ *If the following be used as an assistance for social worship, then the alteration of* we *for* I, us *for* me, our *for* my *or* mine, *is easily made; and in this case all the mention of*

particulars should be omitted, and the prayer confined to the general confessions and requests, omitting the particular ones where the blank spaces stand within hooks [ ] *thus.*

¶ *You may observe several breaks which may be considered as containing so many new heads of prayer. Thus you are to connect any parts of it, or omit as you see occasion.*

O THOU most High and most Holy, whose name is JEHOVAH, the all-seeing and heart-searching GOD, over all blessed for ever; look down in mercy on a poor unworthy sinner, desiring to draw near the throne of grace in the name of the incarnate Saviour, and making mention of his righteousness only. *[No other hope hath my sinful soul, no other help I find but in him; for his dear sake regard my cries, and let my prayer enter into thine ears, O Lord, my God.]

[I come before thee acknowledging my sin; and my iniquities, Lord, would I not hide from thee. Indeed they cannot be hid, for from thee nothing is hid, nothing is secret. Yet, Lord, I have too long and too often covered myself with thick darkness, and neither saw nor desired to see the evil which was in me. Blessed be thy name that thou hast caused the light to shine into my heart, and hast given me any knowledge of the hidden mystery of iniquity there.]

Behold, Lord, *I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin did my mother conceive me;* yet how little did I know of the evil of such a corrupted nature and its exceeding sinfulness? it was hid from my eyes; but now I acknowledge I am vile, and abhor myself. I am altogether become abominable; there is no health in me; evil, and that continually and universally, hath reigned in me; my transgressions are many, mine iniquities tes-

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* Whatever is between hooks thus [ ], may be omitted without any hurt of the sense or connection; or if you choose to use any part of it you may, as shall appear proper to your case.

tify also against me: when I reflect upon the days that are past, confusion covereth me; the flagrant violations of thy holy law in many instances witness against me, my sins in number exceed the hairs of my head, and yet, Lord, how small a part of them do I see? whilst in thy book they have been written, and not a word hath been in my tongue but thou, Lord, knowest it altogether. [I remember, Lord, with particular condemnation my .....*. And O that I might go down mourning to my grave under it, and abhor myself ever for it, even when thou art pacified towards me for it.]

Enter not into judgment with me, lest I be utterly confounded. Shouldst thou try me, I must plead guilty before thee, and acknowledge my just desert to be the worm which dieth not, and the fire which is not quenched. Yea, Lord, thou wouldst be clear in thy uttermost condemnation, for thou dost righteously, but I have rebelled against thee.

Yet glorify thy name in mercy upon me, and according to those gracious promises in which thou hast caused me to put my trust, glorify thy Son in pardoning and saving such a wretch as I am. [Let it now appear, Lord, that the blood of JESUS CHRIST cleanseth from all sin by its cleansing me; and sprinkled therewith, may my poor soul be presented before thy throne with kind acceptance! This is all my salvation; I plead nothing but this, that JESUS died for me. In his blood, in his righteousness only, dare I approach unto thee, O thou most worthy Judge eternal.]

[Blessed be the name of my GOD for his unspeakable gift. Blessed be GOD for JESUS CHRIST! O strengthen my faith in his all-sufficiency, and let not the number or aggravations of

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* Here any particular sin which afflicts your conscience, or which you desire may more affect it, should be mentioned, and the particulars opened, that your heart may be more struck with the mention.

my sins discourage me; but, Lord, make his glory, his obedience unto death, his cross, his crown, to pass before me, that I may without all doubt believe in the satisfaction of my Saviour, and find redemption in him.]

And thou, Lord of life and glory, come and take possession of my heart, take the purchase of thy blood, set up within me thy kingdom, and turn thou me, that so I may be turned. An helpless worm, the servant of sin, the sport of temptation, the bond-slave of corruption, thou seest me. O break this yoke from off my neck, and bring me, Lord, into the liberty of the children of GOD. [Hast thou not redeemed us from all iniquity, to purify to thyself a peculiar people? Art thou not come to bend our hearts in submission to thy will, as well as to ransom us from death and hell? Here is my heart, Lord, take and fashion it to thy holy will.]

Behold, Lord, I groan, being burdened. Since thou hast called I want to follow thee. But O, I find that sin hangs heavy on my soul, my corruptions war against me and trouble me, and my strength is as weakness before them. Help, Lord, or I perish! Come, exert thy power, and set the captive free! Enable me to lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth most easily beset me!

¶ *Here follows three of the great enemies of our souls, Pride, Lust, and Worldliness; no soul but hath need to cry mightily for power against them: though, according to our several tempers and states, some one of them will most especially endanger us: accordingly that part may be made use of, and the others shortened or passed over.*

Against PRIDE.

MY Pride thrusts hard against me that I should fall. [I find within me such high imaginations, such a readiness to resent, such warmth and hastiness of temper.] [I found this day

my spirit hurt by the reflections of ....., by the obstinacy of ....., by the conduct of ....., I murmured as if my lot was hard. I regarded with envy ..... greater success, abilities, and advancement*.] Lord, cast down every imagination which exalteth itself, and bring my thoughts into the obedience of CHRIST; make me content to be the last and the least. Bow me to submission to every dispensation, and keep me quiet under every provocation. [Make me ever to know myself to be vile earth, and a miserable sinner; that I may find my temper really corresponding with my words, when I confess myself to be nothing, and less than nothing, and vanity: content to be as low in others' eyes, as I acknowledge myself to be in thine, and profess to be in my own.

Against LUST.

SUBDUE the hateful Lusts which war against my soul. Thou seest, Lord, how this flesh striveth against the spirit, and how impotent I am to resist. [†Thou knowest how my heart departed from thee after ....., how my eyes wandered with unhallowed looks ....., how my folly wrought in secret ....., to bring forth fruit unto death.] O save me, Lord, from my sinful self; give me strength to restrain the wanderings of my desires; enable me to make a covenant with mine eyes; let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, rather than speak unhallowed words of lewdness, and my hand be cut off ere it be reached out to sin. [It were better for me to die, Lord, than to dishonour thee and my own body.] O make me a clean heart! [Purify my desires, teach me to possess my vessel in sanctification and honour; and may my body, as well as my

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* These are some of the particular, yet universal, workings of Pride. The specifying the time, and place, and persons, brings the remembrance of it more lively upon us, begets deper humility, and awakens greater earnestness.

† What follows between [ ] will afford place for any particularly humbling reflections.

soul, be for thee, O Lord, presented unto thee as a living sacrifice, which is my reasonable service.]

Against WORLDLINESS.

DELIVER me from the Love of this present evil World. Lord, my heart is naturally earthly and sensual. [Thou knowest what a slave I have been to the unrighteous mammon, O wean me from the love of it; may I be crucified unto the world, and the world unto me.] [In my transactions with ..... I found covetousness ready to make me unjust; in looking upon ..... I felt the workings of concupiscence; my backwardness to give to ..... who needed, condemns my worldliness; in my bargain with ..... I did not enough consider him as myself.] Lord, enable me daily to resist all anxious cares and disquieting fears; subdue every covetous desire in my soul; make me more circumspect and conscientious in all my dealings, and may my daily care be not to lay up my treasure upon earth, but in heaven; by such an improvement of the talent which thou hast entrusted with me, as may be most to thy glory, and the relief and comfort of my distressed fellow-creatures and fellow-christians.

O LORD, my strength as well as righteousness, enable me to walk before thee and please thee; may I not only cease to do evil, but learn to do good; write thy laws in my mind, and put them into my heart. [Constrained by the views of thy amazing grace, may I cheerfully surrender my whole self to thee, to be employed in thy work, and devoted to thy service. Yea, Lord, I am thy servant, I am thy servant since thou hast loosed my bands; as bought with a price, may I glorify thee in my body and in my spirit which are thine, and] daily let the fruits of righteousness appear more abundantly in me, which are through thee, my Lord and Saviour, to the praise and glory of GOD. [Thou knowest my wants and my barrenness, how weak and feeble are my graces, how cold my love, how doubting my faith, how lukewarm my zeal, how negligent my fear, and how imperfect all. Lord, strengthen me with might

in the inner man, fashion my soul after thine own blessed image, and daily out of thy fulness give me to partake of the abundance of grace.]

¶ *Here follow petitions for particular graces.* I. *For Faith.* 1. *Under the accusations of guilt.* 2. *Under the workings of corruptions.* 3. *Under temptations.* 4. *Under afflictions. As you most need to exercise it under either of these views, you will find here assistance.*

I. A Prayer for Faith.

1. *Under a sense of guilt.*

O MOST merciful and gracious God, strengthen my faith in thy promises, that I may without all doubt cast my care upon thee, assured that thou carest for me. The remembrance of my past sins is grievous, [particularly ....., and my heart sometimes is ready to fail.] Lord, enable me to believe that thou dost in Jesus abundanly pardon. May I see more of his all-sufficiency, that fear may be cast out, and that I may rejoice in the assurance that thou hast received me, and cast all my sins behind thy back. Yes, Lord and Saviour, I dare not dishonour thee more than I have already done by distrusting thee. I know thou art able to save to the uttermost, thy blood can atone for all; I believe, help thou mine unbelief.

2. *Under the workings of corruption.*

I AM oppressed with corruption, a body of sin and death compasses me round about. [Deep calleth unto deep, and I am ready to say, I am cast out of thy sight, particularly ..... against which I have strove and prayed, and over which I have mourned, returns with new violence, and brings me almost to despair.] See, Saviour, my helpless soul at thy feet; O raise me up, support me, enable me to lay hold of thy strength, and to trust, that I may not be confounded. O give me faith that I may overcome. Lord, I know it is my unbelief which makes my bondage; break thou the chain, and set my soul at liberty.

3. *Under temptation.*

Temptations beset me sore, they thrust at me that I should fall; but in thee is my help. [Thou seest, Lord, how my path is compassed about, and how through the violence of the attack, the corruption of my own vile heart, and my unbelief, iniquity prevails against me.] [*It did so at such a time....., in such a place....., in such company....., under such circumstances....: and though, Lord, from the bottom of my soul thou knowest it is my burden, yet how shall I stand?] Let thine everlasting arms be under me, lift up these hands which hang down, let my eye be fixed on thee, strengthen me, fulfil thy promises, confirm my heart to trust that thou wilt support me under my temptations, or make a way for me to escape from them.

4. *Under afflictions.*

My worldly trials are heavy, [I am afflicted in my person by ....., sickness in my family ....., injuries from others ....., loss or reproach ....., unkindness from those who are so near and dear ....., disappointments, &c.†] Lord, thou canst make them work together for my good; may my heart stand fast in thee; enable me to believe thy kind intentions toward me, that I may not only submit with patience but rejoice in hope.

II. A Prayer for the Love of God.

ENLARGE my affections towards thee, O thou chief of ten thousand and altogether lovely. What hast thou not done

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* I mention here the prevalence of temptation, because I fear there are few real Christians who have not cause to lament their falls, as well as to ask strength to keep them from falling. Spreading our temptations openly before the Lord, and expressly mentioning the circumstances of them, is of especial use to the tempted.

† Particulars must be mentioned.

to engage my heart? ungrateful as I have been, may I be so no more. May my soul be inflamed with love unfeigned towards thee, beholding thy love may it kindle mine; and daily as I receive fresh instances of it from thee, may my returns of gratitude be more abundant. [Open my eyes to see more and more the love wherewith thou hast loved me, make me to know more of its height, and length, and breadth, and depth; make me to see more of my own baseness and vileness, that thy dealings with me may more abundantly impress and constrain my heart.] O that I might love thee with a perfect heart. Lord, may I be increasing in love, till seeing thee as thou art, I shall love thee as I ought.

III. A Prayer for Fear.

LORD, put thy fear into my soul; be thou ever sanctified in me; let me ever tremble before, and dread to offend, thee. May the sense of thy omniscience and nearness ever over-awe my soul; when sin would tempt may I remember that thou art present; may my fear be as my love, filial; may thy displeasure be more grievous to me than the punishment; and may I hate to offend thee, because thou art my good and gracious Father, more than because thou art withal the just and righteous Judge.

IV. A Prayer for Charity.

GOD of all mercy, whose nature and name is love, and who has taught, in amazing manifestations of it in thy Son, what are thy regards towards the children of men, teach me to love others as thou hast loved me. O give me bowels of mercies, kindness, gentleness, meekness. Alas, for this selfish heart of mine! It is so ready to kindle under provocation, to resent unkindness, and to be unfeeling towards other's weakness and wants. [Such a person particularly my vile heart is ready to

dislike...., &c.* Lord, take this uncharitable spirit from me.] Enable me to forgive, as thou for CHRIST'S sake hast forgiven me. [May my censures all fall upon myself, where they are most due, that I may have none to cast on others.] Incline my heart to excuse the faults of others, to think no evil, and to hope all things favourable for them. According to the ability thou hast given me may I readily communicate thy gifts according to the necessities of my brethren. [Make my heart more tender to them, and sympathizing with their distresses, whether of body or soul†.] May their sins grieve me more deeply, and call forth myprayers and my tears over them. Lord, give them repentance who know thee not, [particularly....‡ who are so near and dear to me.] [May I not suffer sin upon them unrebuked, and may my conduct as well as my conversation be reproving and exemplary.] Give me a mouth to comfort the afflicted. May whatever talents thou hast lent me of knowledge or utterance, be employed so as may be most subservient to the good of men's souls, and particularly of those with whom I am more immediately concerned. May my hand be ‖ opened to relieve the indigent according to my power: and as a good steward of thy gifts, enable me conscientiously to be concerned not only to give, but to bestow it in such a way as may be most to thy

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* Nothing serves more effectually to subdue our resentment against any particular person, than praying for them by name.

† Men's souls are the greatest objects of charity.

‡ Unconverted friends and relations should never be forgotten by us.

‖ Though almsgiving be but a branch of charity, we must see that we abound in the exercise of it, if we are indeed in the faith; and by the way it must be observed, that as it will require some pains to enquire out the truly necessitous, this is as much a part of the duty as the gift itself; many for want of being at the pains of this, often encourage idleness instead of relieving of real objects of charity, and thus rob the needy of their portion.

glory, the relief of real indigence, and the support of the helpless. Make me not only liberal, but glad to give, and ready to distribute, that the blessing of a cheerful giver, may be through thy grace upon me. [And accept, O Lord, these small returns of humble acknowledgment as offered in my dear Redeemer, in whose name alone is my hope, and in whose blood I desire my best offerings to be washed, and in whose righteousness I desire my best services to be arrayed, that they may come up with acceptance on thine altar, O GOD.]

V. A PRAYER FOR HUMILITY.

GIVE me, O Lord, the genuine humility which thou delightest in. Let an abiding sense of my vile self and sinful services be ever on my heart. When the deceiver would cause me to compare myself with myself or others, O may my soul still turn to thy holy law, and be confounded before thee in the dust. And when the gifts thou hast bestowed on me would puff me up, let me remember not only that they are received, but what an abuse hath been made of them, and how much cause I have for confusion instead of glorying before thee.

VI. A PRAYER FOR ZEAL.

AWAKEN greater zeal for thy glory in my heart: how lukewarm and insensible to thy interests in the world have I been, and am I still? Lord, give me a deeper sense of thy Majesty, and a more enlarged knowledge of the value of immortal souls, that I may rise up against the evil doers, grieving to see thee dishonoured, and deeply concerned to pluck those brands from the burning. [Lord, may I cheerfully suffer, count no cross grievous, and where duty calls boldly rebuke vice, whatever danger be incurred. Arise, O Lord GOD, and vindicate thine own cause; where is thy zeal and the soundings of thy bowels, are they restrained? see our desolations, and come with great might and succour us.]

INTERCESSIONS *general and particular.*

AND, Lord, hear my poor supplications for others, as well as for myself. Thou seest what desolations are wrought in the earth, how sin covers the face of the world, and gross darkness the people; O send out thy light and thy truth, that the ends of the earth may remember themselves, and be turned unto thee, O Lord. Especially visit our land with thy salvation; we have the form of godliness and the profession of thy gospel, but O how far removed from the practice and the power of it! Return, O GOD of hosts return, lift up the light of thy countenance upon us. [Remove not our candlestick away, as by our manifold iniquities we have most justly provoked thee to do, but remember thy mercy which hath been to a thousand generations, and hear the prayers of thy people, who cry day and night before thee.] Raise up thy power and come among us, and with great might succour us. Send out, we pray thee, labourers into thine harvest; the land mourneth, the people perish for lack of knowledge; give them pastors after thy own mind, who may exalt the cross of the Redeemer, and be successful preachers of his righteousness; bless the few who truly labour in the word and ministry, may thy grace make thy word in their mouths effectual for the conviction, conversion, and consolation of mens souls; particularly bless him who ministers to my soul, and may he see of the fruit of his labour in me, and multitudes be brought by his teaching to the knowledge of the salvation which is in JESUS CHRIST. Lord, make us more diligent, that our profiting may appear under the blessed means of grace which we enjoy. Bless all those who are especially near to me under any ties of relation; may all my friends be thine; my benefactors find in thy favour an abundant return, and those of this house and family be the objects of thy peculiar regard*.

And now, Lord, accept my humble praise for all the mercies I have tasted from the first day even until now; unwor-

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* The particular states of husband and wife, parent and child, master and servant, will afford opportunity for more particular enlargement.

thy indeed, utterly unworthy of the least of them I confess myself to be. Blessed be thy name for the being I enjoy, and for all the blessings of time which accompany it; but above all, blessed be the name of my GOD for his redeeming love, for JESUS the fountain of grace, and for the great and precious promises given freely in him to me a sinner. Blessed be thy name for the knowledge of him whom to know is everlasting life; for all the means of growth in grace, and all the hopes of glory purchased, taken possession of, and to be revealed by and in the Lord JESUS my Saviour; whose righteousness is my title, whose blood is my plea, and who is to me all and in all. In his name and words I would, since he hath commanded it, sum up all my imperfect prayers, saying, *Our Father, &c.*

You have here a long prayer, which may be easily shortened and adapted to your state whatever it be: remember only that your eye in all your prayers never lose sight of the Advocate, JESUS CHRIST the righteous, in and through whom alone any answer of peace can be given to your requests. All blessings in time and eternity are the purchase of his blood on the cross; they are given into his power, as the peculiar head of the mediatorial kingdom; and are to be obtained by that intercession which he ever liveth to make for his people.

As the foregoing prayer is intended as a help to the sincere in general, it may be useful to add something particular of the same kind respecting the Lord's Supper, which, with some Meditations on select passages of scripture, may serve to enliven our souls before, and at this ordinance.

A PRAYER BEFORE THE LORD'S SUPPER.

DEAR Saviour of my soul, look upon the sinner thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood. I come because thou hast bidden me, and my soul needeth the refreshment thou hast provided. Never do I draw near but I bring

with me fresh cause of humiliation, and carry new burdens to thee my Lord, from which I need relief. Look upon me in thy wonted compassion, and pity and pardon all the faithlessness with which I stand chargeable before thee. JESUS, my hope is in thee. Ten thousand times have I forfeited all the mercies of my GOD, but thou hast been my Advocate, thy blood hath spoken for me; still, Lord, let it speak, and sprinkled on me purge my heart from dead works to serve the living GOD. Bleeding Lamb of GOD, thy open wounds afford a safe retreat to my poor soul. I fly to thee to hide me. Let my iniquities be covered, let my backslidings be healed. My deep complaints come up before thee; this body of sin, when shall my soul be delivered from it? Lord, mine eyes are unto thee. I have found renewed attacks from my corrupt and vile affections*; to the blessed fountain opened for sin and uncleanness I fly; O wash this spotted soul, and heal the leprosy within. When now again I am drawing near to thee, draw near to my sinful soul. Strengthen my confidence in thy love, when I partake of the instituted pledges thou hast left me. O comfort me with the assurance that thou art mine. Teach these eyes with tears of penitence and joy to look upon thy broken body, give me thus that repentance unto salvation never to be repented of. O my Lord, conquered by thy dying love, may every lust be offered up a willing sacrifice at thy cross; take them, Lord, slay them before thee; consume the dross of base affections, purify my soul, and with this sacred fire refine it like thine own.

Anointed JESUS, save me from every sin; set up within my soul thy kingdom of righteousness, and peace and joy in the HOLY GHOST; reign over a willing subject, and let thy service be ever the happy freedom of my soul. O what bondage, Lord, like the bondage of corruption; what liberty so sweet as that which they enjoy who take up thy light burden, thy easy yoke. Thou askest nothing from me which it is not my happi-

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* Particulars must be enlarged upon, according to your latest temptations and most besetting corruptions.

ness to renounce; thou commandest nothing wherein it is not my happiness to obey thee. O then let me count nothing grievous which thou dost enjoin: anew I would make my surrender unto thee; again would I solemnly seal my soul for thine own; enable me to approve myself more faithful to the vows which are upon me, and live more devoted to thee who hast died for me.

Thou knowest, Lord, my simpleness, and my faults are not hid from thee; thou knowest it is the desire of my soul to love and please thee; it is my bitterness that I ever offend thee: O when shall I have done with sin? when shall I grieve no more thy Spirit in me? O Lord, when shall it yet be? Continue to be gracious; draw me nearer to thy blessed self, that I may run more eagerly after thee; shew me more of thy beauty, that sin may grow more hateful in my eyes: lay thy hand upon me and fashion me, O fashion me, dear Redeemer, in thy own blessed image, and make me wholly such as thou wouldst have me to be. Make thyself known unto me in the breaking of bread, reveal thyself to my poor soul as thou dost not to the world; make me to taste the comforts of thy regard, that I may be enabled for all thy service. And open my eyes to heavenly things; when I remember thee on the cross, may I look to thee also on the throne, and feel the weight of thy expected appearance continually influencial over me. O Saviour, that I may then be found of thee in peace, and meet thee on thy throne of judgment with kind acceptance and regard! Thou wilt come, I know thou wilt, and wilt not tarry. O Lord Jesus, may I be ever looking for, and hasting unto, the day of thine appearing, and be found watching when thou shalt stand at the door and knock.

Receive my thanks, dear suffering Saviour, thou compassionate high priest, who canst be touched with the feeling of thy people's infirmities, blessing and praise be ever thine. Help me daily to be telling of thy salvation, till thou shalt give me a place with those blessed spirits of the just made perfect, whose happy labour is everlasting songs of thanksgiving to thee, who

wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, and made us kings and priests that we might reign with thee in thy kingdom for ever. *Amen.*

IT is supposed that every Communicant walks in a continual course of self-examination. The temper described in Chapter III. will afford the most interesting points of inquiry. As we shall ever find how short we come of that blessed disposition there described, we shall have continual need for new confessions of sin and unfaithfulness, with renewed purposes of heart of cleaving to the Lord. If any thing particularly humbling hath befallen us, or any new temptation beset us, we must spread it before the Redeemer, and pour out our griefs into his compassionate bosom: he is a kind Saviour, we know little of the depths of his bowels and mercies, if we did we should never dishonour him as we do with our distrusts, and should be more deeply melted down under the sense of his amazing patience and love. One view of CHRIST in his transcendently gracious character, as the dear Redeemer of lost souls, hath more power and efficacy to break the bonds of sin, and urge us to obedience, than all the vows, promises, and resolutions, wherewith we can bind our souls.

CHAP. VII.

On MEDITATION.

AT the Lord's Table, and before we go to it, a most profitable exercise is divine Meditation; nothing serves more to spiritualize and enliven the soul, than the consideration of some of the great and precious promises that in JESUS CHRIST are made to us; or of those blessed portions of scripture that more immediately speak of him whom our soul loveth; declare his offices, describe his sufferings, or point us to the glory which followed; they are too numerous to be collected: I will select a few as heads of Meditation, which I shall endeavour to

enlarge upon, and refer you to many others which will afford like profitable improvement.

The interval which we spend during the celebration of the Lord's Supper should be usually most employed in this way. By this means our devotion at the ordinance itself is kept from languishing, and we accustom ourselves more habitually to that communion with God which should be our daily walk.

MEDITATION I.

Genesis iii. 15.

I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

How wondrous the compassions of God to fallen man! he left him not to despair; he slew him not in his sin; he pitied, he pardoned. See in this first promise, O my soul, how unwilling the Lord is that we should perish. A beam of light and hope breaks through the darkness, and revives the guilty soul of man; he saw and believed; and shall I be now faithless? The true light hath shined, the Sun of righteousness is arisen with healing in his wings; I see him not through a glass darkly, but as it were face to face, beholding the promise fulfilled by his appearing in the fulness of time. What confidence then, my soul, should inspire thee, when here before thine eyes thou seest the serpent's head bruised by the sacrifice of the woman's seed? O Saviour, let me adore thy grace, and rest satisfied in the glorious victory thou hast obtained. Thou wast manifested to destroy the works of the devil; O fulfil in me this great design of thy coming, bring near thy cross to my heart, and bruise at thy feet whatever is serpentine and diabolical in this fallen nature; make me to know by experience of the effectual working of thy mighty power, that thou art this promised seed. Let me stand a monument of thy grace on earth, and bring me as a trophy of thy victory to heaven.

MEDITATION II.

PSALM lv. 6.

And I said, O that I had wings like a dove: for then would I fly away, and be at rest.

WHAT a wearisome world is this! sin and sorrow compass me about; though some sweet drops of heavenly consolation at times revive my soul, yet how often hangs my harp on the willows, and how often is my head bowed down as the ears of corn with drops of dew? Lord, thou hast told me of a blessed rest which remaineth for the people of GOD; thou hast drawn me to look up to it, to pant after it; had my soul wings to fly to thy bosom, how swiftly would I pierce the skies? no timorous dove darting from the rapacious vulture seeks so eagerly its covert, as my poor heart should fly from these sublunary evils to that shadow of thy wings where is everlasting rest. When shall it yet be, dear Lord, that my weary soul shall find in thee repose? hide me in the cleft of the rock, in thy bleeding side may my sinful soul now find a safe retreat; give me the wings of faith, that I may fly to this relief from the pursuit of divine justice, and a consuming law; and when this clog of earth that weigheth down my soul shall be shook off in the dust, and my imprisoned spirit disentangled from the clay, then let the wings of love direct my flight to the heaven where thou art, and close sheltered by thy once bleeding side, let me bid an eternal adieu to sin and sorrow. Be patient, my soul, yet a little while, and hope unto the end; he that is faithful and true saith, *I will give thee rest.*

MEDITATION III.

PSALM cxix. 94.

I am thine, save me: for I have sought thy precepts.

YES, Lord, I am thine by every tie; thine by Creation, thine by Providence, thine by Redemption, thine by Grace, thine by every obligation of Love, thine by repeated and solemn surrenders of myself unto thee, wholly thine am I for ever bound to be: Yet how sacrilegeously have I alienated from thee what was thine; how often have I faithlessly dishonoured thee, and broken the vows which were upon me; how like a broken bow have I started aside, and still, Lord, my vile heart how prone is it to wander from thee? How shall I render to thee thine own? How shall I approve myself to thee? Save me, it must be thy own work; without thee I can do nothing to please thee; save me from myself, from my sins, from my corruptions, from my weakness, visit me with thy salvation. If thou set my heart at liberty, then shall I run in the paths of thy commandments; Lord, they are righteous, just, and good; I delight in them after the inner man. O that my ways were made so direct that I might walk in them for ever! O that I could do thy will on earth as it is done in heaven! Prepare me for the blessed service above, by daily power communicated from thee to walk in thy ways here below.

MEDITATION IV.

PSALM lxxiii. 25.

Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.

LORD, what is heaven but thy favour and reviving presence? what is hell but thy absence and displeasure? the glory of thy sanctuary is thy blessed self, without thee those

shining mansions would be desolate; thou art there, and there to bless thy people with the enjoyment of thyself; when shall I see thee face to face? when shall my heaven come, to awake up in thy likeness, to behold the transforming glory of thy countenance? O Lord, for thee my soul longeth, to be where thou art, and as thou art. O heaven, heaven, my GOD is there, he that is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever; If thou art mine, (and that thou art, thy promises have given me most reviving assurance) if thou art mine, what can I ask for more, or wish beside? Lord, thou art all-sufficient. Whilst here I linger out the moment allotted me, though distant, too distant from thee, thou shalt be still my joy and my hope: What rival would steal away my affections from thee? what earthly object would intrude and rob thee of my love? Lord, there is nothing upon earth I desire in comparison of thee; wealth, honour, and pleasure, tempt me away, but what can they give me in exchange for thee? are they not loss and dung? are they not on the balances lighter than vanity itself? Think, my foolish heart, when thou inclinest to listen to the syren's song, which on earth insnares poor souls in perdition and destruction, think of thy better portion; live on Him who is alone able to supply the void within, and from the never-failing streams which flow from the fountain of all consolation, will replenish thee day by day, till from the streams thou comest to the fountain head, receivest the fulness of thy desires, and dwellest in GOD, and GOD in thee.

MEDITATION V.

CANTICLES viii. 14.

Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices.

REMEMBERING here thy death till thy coming again, I wait for thy appearance. Lord, I know thou wilt come, and wilt not tarry. O that my soul may meet thee, as

a bride adorned for the bridegroom. I call thee my beloved, and art thou not such to me? thy love to me constraineth my soul, thou chief of ten thousand, thou altogether lovely. Why are thy chariot-wheels so long a coming?....I look upwards, and start at my own desires; how shall I appear before him, how shall I be regarded of him? black as the tents of *Kedar*, defiled my garments, and false to my Lord, as I have been, can I wish for his arrival?....He hateth putting away, he is compassionate and kind; he pities, he pardons; he saith, Return unto me, and I will return unto you. Lord, I come to thee; array me in thy comeliness, remove my filthy garments, call me thine own, and take thy spotless robes of righteousness and adorn my soul, and then hasten thy coming, my Beloved. Sweet are the mountains of spices, where in thy ordinances thou hast left a savour of thy blessed self; sweet is the repast which here thou hast provided for my soul, but sweeter far will be the feast when thou shalt favour the table with thy real presence; and, like the bounding hart that rushes from the mountains steep, come down to me and catch me up to meet thee in the clouds; there better spices breathe their fragrance, for thou art there, and where thou art all blessing must abound. Haste then, and bring me to the holy hills where thou my Lord dwellest, and fill me with the joy of thy everlasting love.

MEDITATION VI.

Canticles i. 3.

Thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee.

THY name, dear Lord, is sweeter to my soul than fragrant ointment to the faint and weary. Jesus! what music to the sinner's ears! the dearest, greatest, sweetest name that heaven or earth affords. What name like thine sheds joy and blessing on the holy souls above? what name like thine diffuses peace and hope on guilty souls below? thou art the all in all. Make me Lord, to taste and see how gracious thou art; shed

abroad in my heart a sweet savour of thy ointment; from thee, my glorious priest, let the precious balm run down on me the meanest of thy members; I am called by thy name, let me partake of thine anointing. I love thee, O Lord my Saviour, I wish to love thee more. My heart, O that it might be a chaste virgin's heart for thee, nor wander after other lovers; bind my affections to thee stronger than death; one spirit with thee may I henceforth be: In mystic union join me to thyself, and in that train may I be found of virgin souls, that, separated from the defilements of the world, of flesh and sense, follow thee, thou Lamb of GOD, whithersoever thou leadest them.

MEDITATION VII.

PSALM lxxiv. 1, 2.

How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.

YES, Lord, thy tabernacles are indeed amiable to my soul; I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Thy servant *David* at a distance longed, yea, even fainted, with desire, for these gracious opportunities I enjoy: how thankful should I be, that I can thus draw near thee; so often enjoy the welcome returning sabbaths, and meet so often at thy Table with my brethren and my companions. Lord, raise up then my longings after thee more fervently; let my heart and flesh cry out more intensely for thee; thy tabernacles are only amiable when thou dost manifest thyself in the midst of us; thy courts are then adorned, when thou, O King, appearest in thy galleries, *Cant.* vii. 5. Thy table is a feast indeed, when thou comest in to see the guests, and givest the welcome benediction. To day, my Lord, draw near to bless me; awaken my thankfulness, open my lips, that my mouth may shew forth thy praise; raise up my heart to thee in the

heavens; from the tabernacles of thy grace may my ascending soul mount up to the tabernacles of thy glory: how amiable these, O Lord, when shall I come to appear among the shining host which dwell for ever there! when shall my soul abide in this temple for ever, and go out no more? Thou GOD of my life, who hast given me to desire to see thee, thou wilt not disappoint the desires thou hast kindled. In my flesh shall I see GOD. Praise the Lord, O my soul.

MEDITATION VIII.

LUKE xxiii. 33.

There they crucified him.

DRAW near, my soul, and see this great sight; this is thy GOD who bleeds for thy iniquities; see him led like a malefactor through the streets of *Jerusalem*, and nailed like a murderer to expire on a tree; because thou deservedst all this shame, and pain, and death, therefore he endures it for thee. Look into his wounded temples, and see how deep the thorns have pierced; his face is marred more than any man's, black with buffetings, and foul with blood; his weary head hangs down and mingles tears with clotted gore: yet, thou dear Redeemer, thy beauty then is fairest, when thou appearest most defiled; these tears, this blood, these sorrows, are my peace, my joy, my everlasting consolation. Look up, sinful soul, and love a dying Saviour! see his hands extended wide, they open to embrace thee, I see them dropping down most precious streams of blood; they are iron bound, but his love will break the chain, and stretch them forth to lift me to his throne! They now are cancelling my deadly debt, my bond of suffering is nailed with them and torn; I see in the deep wounds of his hands, graven as with an iron pen in a rock, a pardon written with blood. Yes, Lord, I believe the chastisement of my peace is upon thee, and that by these pains I shall be healed. I look upon thy feet, Lord; they cannot as usual carry thee about doing good, but

they tread now on their last weary step, and next will stand upon the everlasting hills; tired with the way, mortality hath often longed for rest; briars and thorns have torn them in the desert, and rugged paths afflicted them: but no thorns so sharp, no path so rugged as this, and no rest so needed as that sleep of death, when pain shall torment no more. How have I trod the dreadful paths of sin? how have my feet carried me from God to every vile indulgence? I see my punishment in thee; and O that with tears I might bedew those deep and deadly nail-prints, that tell me at once my crime and my forgiveness. What ghastly wound gapes wide beneath the heart, and pours down this crimson torrent of mingled blood and water! that bloody spear declares the cause; how deep it hath gone; indignity offends the corps, when pain can do no more. It is well. It became him to suffer these things, but why? my guilt had made it needful; yes, my soul, thou mayest regard with astonishment the sufferer, and with detestation the authors of this black deed, but if thou wilt see the origin, knock at thy breast, and there the murderers dwell; this sinful nature, these vile affections, this deep rebellion against the Majesty of heaven, these brought the Lamb of God to such ignominy, torment, and death. Here then at his cross let my indignation rise, here then let an holy revenge burn within my heart, here let not mine eye pity, nor my hand spare; these his enemies, his murderers, I will bring them forth and slay them before him. Lord, let me keep back nothing from thee, who gavest thyself to such suffering for me.

MEDITATION IX.

HEBREWS vi. 18.

That we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.

WHAT grounds of consolation doth the scripture propose to the afflicted soul? Hunted by the devouring Law, trembling beneath the sword of Justice, unable to escape the stroke I could not endure, mercy sets before me an open door,

and like *Jael* to *Sisera* (but with a much more gracious intention!) invites me, faint and weary, to repose my soul under her shadow. The guilty soul, exposed to wrath eternal, here sees a beam of hope arising, and our fears, like morning clouds, pass away. Blessed be he who hath opened and consecrated this new and living way for the despairing and desperate, through a Mediator's broken body; to this sure refuge will I fly: Lord, help me to enter in, that I may dwell in safety; let pardoning love fast bar the gate against an accusing conscience and a condemning law; let thy faithfulness and truth be as a brazen wall around me, that none of my fears may break through, none of my sins destroy me. Let thy power keep the strong-hold of my heart, that no son of violence may hurt me; thus let my city of refuge be kept from every avenger, and under thy shadow let me sit not only with safety but great delight. Thou hast spoken, and who shall disannul it? thou willest me to be comforted, and why shall I refuse the consolation? Strengthen thou my faith, Lord, that my joy may abound.

MEDITATION X.

HEBREWS x. 38.

If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

THE scriptures are full of warning; take notice, my soul, and with holy jealousy work out thy salvation with fear and trembling. How dangerous to draw back! better never have known the way of righteousness. Yet how common these departures from the faith; how many have I known who seemed to begin in the spirit, and have ended in the flesh? set up, my soul, these pillars before thee in this our plain of *Sodom*. *Lot's* wife may be seen in every street: what is there to engage thee to turn back, or cast a lingering look behind? The world from which thou art called is a vain shadow, it is unsatisfactory in the enjoyment, it perisheth in the using, and it stands only as some mighty pile of fuel to be destroyed by the fire. The crea-

tures of it are vain: its indulgencies, what fruit do they bring? and how like husks do its most gilded baits disappoint our appetite? count then the cost. Lord, my soul looketh unto thee; hold me by my hand, that I may not depart from thee. I have such a foolish, such a backsliding heart, that if left but a day to myself I shall turn aside; but thou, who hast led me so far, wilt not now let me go; by thee only can I be holden up; my heart is in thine hand, thou shalt preserve me from the power of the enemy, thou shalt teach me the way wherein I should go, thou shalt guide me with thine eye. I know, Lord, none can pluck me out of thy hand: I will trust herefore and not be afraid, though thousands fall on every side; thou are my shield and rock of defence. Much have I experienced of thy kindness and care, more I believe thou hast in store. I wait for thy salvation, and I have a good hope because of thy word; here my anchor fixes. If thou say, I will put my fear into thine heart, and thou shalt not depart from me; then may I with confidence rest upon thy grace and love.

MEDITATION XI.

1 Cor. vi. 20.

For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

If any thing can engage my heart to the dear Redeemer, it must be the views of his amazing love and grace, and the sense of the deep obligations these lay upon me; when I see the price he hath paid for me, how can I except to his claim? It hath cost thee precious blood to redeem me from my state of endless misery, and now thou challengest the return of service. Lord, I am thy servant: I am thy servant, for thou hast loosed my bands; I will, through thy grace, make thy glory my great aim and end. I have lived long to dishonour thee, henceforth may thy name be exalted in me and by me; my body is for thee, O Lord; it hath served divers lusts

and pleasures, but thou hast redeemed it from the guilty service. It shall serve no more: every sense, every member, let it be an instrument of righteousness unto GOD. My spirit is thine; its passions, its vile affections, shall reign no more; let purity be written on my inmost soul, and my thoughts be brought into obedience to thee, O CHRIST. Yet, Lord, after all, what glory can redound to thee from such worthless services as mine? that thou condescendest to accept them, brings me in more thy debtor still. Well, Lord, I am more than content, I am happy thus to be rendering myself to thee, and increasing thereby my obligations; glorify thyself in me in mercy, till thou glorify me with thyself in the kingdom of thy glory.

MEDITATION XII.

TITUS ii. 10.

That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

GOD is my Saviour; that he is GOD is my comfort, for now I know his all-sufficiency of power and love, able to save to the uttermost, and rich in mercy to all that call upon him. I am called to adorn that doctrine which bringeth salvation, and teacheth us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world; and it is my serious purpose and desire to do so. My character in the world will call for my first regard, to walk in wisdom towards those who are without; to shew an unblameableness of conversation, that they who are of a contrary part may have no evil thing justly to say of me. I will labour to shew all good fidelity in my dealings, to pay a conscientious regard to truth in my words, to provide things honest in the sight of all men, to be industrious in my calling, to owe no man any thing, to abstain from the appearances of evil, lest I make my brother to offend. My behaviour in my family, may it be ever such

as becometh godliness; I would go in and out before them as an example unto the believers. I would watch particularly against self-will and anger: I would always speak at my meals something which should be for the use of edifying. I would be constant in prayer with them day and night, that the blessing of GOD may be in the midst of us. I would watch over all around me with a jealous eye, and above all, over myself, that I lay no stumbling-block in their way; I would instruct them to the best of my abilities in the knowledge of the Redeemer of sinners, and seek that I and my house might serve the Lord. In my particular transactions with GOD in secret, I will endeavour to lay bare my heart before him; I will take his holy word; I will ask for his illuminating Spirit; I will examine mine own self; no bosom sin, I trust, shall find a hiding-place: my burdens of sin and sorrow will I lay at the feet of my Lord. I will plead with him his promises, and leave my case in my great Advocate's hand. In this way the desire of my soul will be answered, and my Redeemer honoured. Lord, adorn me with thy Spirit, that I may thus adorn thy gospel.

MEDITATION XIII.

HEBREWS vii. 25.

He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.

SALVATION is my great concern; I am the creature of a day; my body is of the dust, and returning to the dust again; I am in jeopardy every hour. Here I have no abiding city; as a tenant at will I may be dismissed at a minute's warning; but I have an immortal soul, a soul that must be happy or miserable to eternity; a soul that must join angels in glory, or fiends in darkness. How weighty then is the concern of salvation? and how important each moment that shortens the span allotted me below!

When I look within myself, how far from salvation doth my state appear? A sinner I, vile and abominable; in nature

at enmity with GOD, in practice a transgressor times beyond number; under guilt which I cannot remove, under corruption I cannot subdue, under wrath I cannot avert, and such wrath as is for ever wrath to come.

When I look to GOD, what can I expect? holy in his nature, and therefore infinitely removed from sin; just, and therefore bound to punish it; unchangeable, and therefore punishing eternally; omnipotent, there can be no resistance; omniscient, and therefore no escape from his notice.

Who shall deliver me? Behold me, saith the Saviour, I am he that bringeth salvation, salvation to the uttermost; mighty to save; atoning blood shall sprinkle the throne of justice, eternal wisdom shall guide thy steps, and almighty power strengthen thee. My salvation is near, I bring it to thee in my word, I seal it to thee with my blood, and will accomplish it in thee by my Spirit for ever. Do so, Lord: if thou wilt save, none can destroy.

MEDITATION XIV.

EPHESIANS ii. 5.

By grace ye are saved.

TRUE, Lord, or such a wretch as I must despair; impotent and helpless to every thing which is good, and prone to every thing which is evil, what must become of me if salvation was not free; it is of thy eternal purpose and grace that there is any hope for sinners; it is of thy grace that I am called out of darkness into thy marvellous light; it is of rich grace, that when I was dead in sin I was quickened together with CHRIST; it is by grace alone I stand; whatever attainments I reach unto, still it is by the grace of GOD I am what I am; without this grace I am nothing, have nothing, can do nothing, but sin. And in eternity, as well as time, the grace

of my GOD will alone be exalted, when the top-stone of the spiritual building is laid, it shall be with shouting, crying, Grace, grace, unto it. When eternal life is adjudged me in the last day, it will be the gift of GOD in JESUS CHRIST; and through eternity this will be the theme of all the saved by grace, Thou, Lord, alone, art worthy to receive blessing, and glory, and honour. If it be of grace then it is no more of works; why is my foolish heart then continually going about to rob GOD of the glory of his grace? it is of my pride and unbelief; my unbelief that staggers at the promise, and will not suffer me to think GOD can be glorified more in the exercise of sovereign grace in the Redeemer, than in the execution of deserved vengeance on me a sinner. My pride, that fain would sacrifice to its own drag, by offering something of my own to plead for my acceptance. Lord, give me clearer views of the riches of thy grace, that my unbelief may be confounded; and deeper discoveries of the utter wretchedness of all I am and do, that my pride may be abased: and thus may I thankfully embrace this free salvation, and be content to be saved from first to last as a sinner.

MEDITATION XV.

1 PETER iii. 22.

Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

WHAT a glorious contrast are my Saviour's sufferings and exaltation! he suffered, it became him. The cross was ignominious, but the crown he hath received exceeds in glory. He was crucified in weakness, but now all power is delivered to him in heaven and in earth. The scourges ploughed up long furrows on his back, his face was disfigured with buffetings, his head pierced with thorns; but now he shineth as the sun going forth in his strength, glorious in holiness. The soldiers mocked, and nailed him to the tree; but angels now bow down, and hail him over all GOD blessed for ever. He

bowed his head and died for sin once, now death is swallowed up in victory; the mount of *Calvary* is exchanged for the mount of GOD; the reed for the sceptre of the universal kingdom; and the iron nails for that rod of dominion which shall bruise his enemies to pieces, as the vessels of a potter are broken. What cause then have I to rejoice in my King, so great and glorious in himself, and exalted on my behalf, to reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet; if he take my cause in hand, who shall be able to harm me? what are fiends of hell, or men on earth, that I should fear them? Be strong, then, my soul, in the Lord, and in the power of his might; he will make thee more than conqueror on earth, till he shall take thee to reign with himself in heaven.

THE following texts, as they stand ranged under different heads, will afford abundant matter of Meditation; and as the Bible will be the best companion to the Altar, I would wish you ever to take it with you, and employ your leisure moments then, and indeed always, chiefly in considering its great and glorious truths, and meditating thereon.

HEADS OF MEDITATION.

I. Love of GOD.

Romans v. 8. John iii. 16. Eph. ii. 4. 1 John iii. 1. Rev. i. 5, 6. Titus iii. 4. 2 Cor. v. 14.

II. Faithfulness of GOD.

Heb. vi. 18. Deut. vii. 9. 1 Cor. 1. 9. 1 Cor. x. 13. 1 Thess. iv. 24. 1 John i. 9. 1 Peter iv. 19. Lam iii. 23.

III. Pardoning Grace.

Isaiah i. 18. Psalm ciii. 8. Neh. ix. 17. Heb. viii. 12. Isaiah xliii. 25. Isaiah xliv. 22. Micah vii. 18. Isaiah lv. 7. 1 John ii. 1. Luke vii. 47. Psalm cxxx. 4. Eph. i. 7.

IV. Strengthening Grace.

2 Cor. xii. 9. Isaiah xli. 10. Psalm cxix. 28. Psalm cxxxviii. 3. Phil. iv. 13. Col. i. 11.

V. Under Temptation.

1 Cor. x. 13. 2 Pet. ii. 9. Heb. ii. 18. James i. 2. Heb. iv. 15. 2 Cor. i. 4. Psalm xlvi. 1. Psalm xci. 15. Jer. xiv. 8.

VI. Divine Teaching.

Isaiah liv. 13. 1 John ii. 27. Psalm xxv. 8. Jer. xxxi. 34. John xiv. 16. Psalm xxxii. 8. 1 Cor. ii. 13.

VII. Sufficiency of CHRIST's Atonement and Satisfaction.

Job xxxiii. 24. Heb. ix. 14. 1 Peter i. 19. 1 John i. 7. Rom. viii. 1. Acts xiii. 39. 1 Tim. i. 15. Heb. vii. 25. Rom. viii. 33.

VIII. Imputation of Righteousness.

Rom. iv. 11. Rom. x. 4. Gal. iii. 9. Isaiah xlii. 21. Phil. iii. 9. 1 Cor. i. 30. Rom. iv. 6. Rom. v. 18. Isaiah lvi. 1.

IX. Sanctification.

Jer. xxxi. 33. Rom. viii. 4. Jude 1. 1 Cor. vi. 11. Rom. xv. 16. John xvii. 17. 1 Thess. v. 23. Exod. xxxi. 13. Heb. xii. 14. Luke i. 75.

X. Person of CHRIST.

Cant. v. 16. Isaiah ix. 6. Psalm xlv. 8. Isaiah lxiii. 1. Cant. i. 3. Isaiah lii. 7.

XI. Sufferings of CHRIST.

Isaiah liii. 5. Isaiah lii. 14. Col. ii. 11. Luke ii. 7. Matt. ii. 13. Luke xiii. 31. Matt. xxvi. 37. Mark xiv. 44. Matt. xxvii. 30. John xix. 23. Matt. xxvii. 29. John xix. 34. Matt. xxvii. 60.

XII. Glory of CHRIST.

Acts v. 31. Mark xvi. 19. Acts vii. 55. Phil. ii. 10. Isaiah vi. 1....5. 1 Pet. iii. 22. Rev. v. 8....14.

THE

CONCLUSION.

AS the intention of the foregoing treatise is, through the grace of GOD, to render Communicating a spiritual service, it will be necessary to warn those into whose hands it may fall, to be peculiarly careful not to rest upon the ordinance itself, or the exactness of their preparation according to any form which is prescribed to them, but to look chiefly to their profiting by it; to observe whether their hearts are drawn nearer to GOD in CHRIST, and in the memorial of his death their expectation of his coming again more enlivened. Formality is the most dangerous of all states, and outward religion, where the experimental knowledge of CHRIST is wanting, removes persons farther from the kingdom of GOD than outward vices; the one puffing up the pride of vain man, whilst the other lays him open to conviction of his danger. Let it not be imagined that this is spoken to encourage outward vices, GOD forbid; no, but as an awful warning to those, who, resting on the form of godliness, deny the power of it.

May you be not almost, but altogether, Christians: And if the great Master of the feast bless these words to your illumination, instruction, edification, consolation, or sanctification, His be the praise; to Him alone praise is due.

FINIS.

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